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MEMOIRS of H.R.H. PRINCE CHRISTOPHER of GREECE



PRINCE CHRISTOPHER
In Greek General's uniform.

MEMOIRS
of
H.R.H. PRINCE CHRISTOPHER
of
GREECE

SIXTH IMPRESSION

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To
MY WIFE

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A WARNING TO THE READER

All books of this type start the same way. The average education of any small boy does not vary much in any country. Nurses and schoolrooms are more or less the same the world over. Therefore, if it bores you, skip a chapter or two and the beginning, and I hope you will start getting really interested before you get to the middle.

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD

IN looking back on my life I feel rather as I imagine Rip Van Winkle must have felt, for the world in which I find myself to-day is not the one into which I was born. Somewhere near the middle of my forty-nine years is a sharp break. On one side of it is the past with its memories of an era of peace and opulence when kings sat securely on their thrones and Europe contained three Empires and fourteen Monarchies. On the other is the present, shorn perhaps of the glamour which is popularly supposed to surround royalty from the cradle to the grave, but rich nevertheless in experiences of tragedy and comedy, of joy and sorrow which would never have fallen to my lot under the old scheme of things.

I timed my arrival into this world auspiciously enough. I was born the youngest of a family of eight; so much an afterthought that the Spartan discipline of the nursery had relaxed from long disuse and I met with far more indulgence from my parents than any of my brothers and sisters. Twenty years separated me from Constantine, my eldest brother, and between Andrew—who was the nearest to me in age—and me, was a gap of nearly seven years.

My father was King George I of Greece, born Prince William of Denmark, brother of Queen Alexandra of England, and brought to Athens in 1863 to found a new Greek dynasty. My mother was the Grand Duchess Olga of Russia, daughter of the Grand Duke Constantine and granddaughter of the Czar Nicholas I.

I was born at my grandfather's house, Pavlovsk, in Russia, in an immense and rather draughty *salon* that had been converted into a bedroom for my mother. It had originally been the studio of the Empress Marie Feodorovna, wife of the Emperor Paul I, who made a hobby of ivory-turning, and one or two examples of her work and the tools she had used still stood there—objects of never-failing interest to me on my visits to my grandparents.

At the age of two months, I embarked on my first sea voyage. It might well have been my last, for the royal yacht which had been sent to take my mother and me back to Athens was caught in a terrific storm in the Black Sea. For hours we rolled and pitched, unable to make the entrance to the Bosphorus, while the cruiser which was escorting us went hopelessly adrift and was found only twelve hours later and towed in with difficulty.

I, of course, slept peacefully through all the clamour, but my mother was quite exhausted when we landed and my peasant nurse loudly bewailed the unlucky omen of a prince making such a stormy entrance into his own country. Looking back on my life, I must admit there seems to have been some justification for her misgivings.

My first years were spent in the palace at Athens, a gaunt structure of stuccoed white marble, built about 1850 by my father's predecessor, King Otho, who was a Bavarian. It was hideous—like a huge cardboard-box, but set as it was on a hill dominating the city, it had a certain majesty. Judged by modern standards it was excessively uncomfortable. There was only one bathroom in the whole place and no one had ever been known to take a bath in it for the simple reason that the taps would scarcely ever run and, on the rare occasions when they could be coaxed into doing so, emitted a thin trickle of water in which the corpses of defunct roaches and other strange animals floated dismally.



PRINCE CHRISTOPHER, AGED THREE, AND HIS MOTHER, QUEEN OLGA

So every morning tin tubs with spouts were brought into the room and in these my brothers and I had to take cold plunges. I used to lie in my warm bed awaiting my turn, inwardly registering a vow that if I were a king I would abolish bathing in my country—until my tutor came and pulled off the bedclothes.

In the winter when the heavy rains washed the streets and every turgid river and lazy little stream became a swollen torrent, the cold of the Palace was almost unbearable. The wind whistled down the corridors and curled like a lash in and out of the lofty *salons*. Some of the rooms had fire-places and in the others were porcelain stoves which gave out a fierce but concentrated heat so that you roasted the side that happened to be nearest to them and shivered from the draught on your other side. For lighting we had oil lamps suspended from the ceiling or set on tables in the most unexpected places. They exuded a strong odour and a thin blue smoke that occasionally made our eyes water.

But, despite its shortcomings, the Palace in Athens was a wonderful place to me then. Does anything we get in later life ever equal the memory of the house we first knew as home? Whether it was a castle or a two-roomed cottage made no difference; its walls enclosed our world. No matter what the years may bring us we can always look back on it standing safe, secure, unchanging in the kaleidoscope of life.

The Palace in itself would have been a joy to any child. The long, dim galleries and unused rooms made endless appeal to the imagination. The vast entrance hall with its massive stone pillars and the grand staircase—which was used only on State occasions—the reception of foreign royalty, weddings or Court balls—were ideal for hide-and-seek.

Then the delight of bicycling on wet afternoons through the enormous ball-rooms that ran the whole length of the Palace! My father, although he was

habitually strict enough to keep us all in awe of him, was the best of playfellows and could generally be persuaded to lead the procession, winding in and out among the pillars and, after him, would come the whole family in order of seniority—I bringing up the rear. We would start off in stately fashion until, often as not, we smashed into one another and came to earth in a tangled heap, some of us shrieking with laughter, others with the pain of bruises.

Then there were my father's private apartments on the ground floor with their mingled associations : the study where we were called up for judgment when necessary, the long, narrow room with its glass encased models of ships, which we were not allowed to touch but never tired of looking at ; the big sitting-room with its blue damask and walnut, where we always dined when we were alone.

Upstairs on the first floor was my mother's suite of seven rooms, her bedroom and dressing-room, three *salons*—in one of which all lunched together—a small library, sewing-rooms, linen-cupboards and a long, narrow gallery where ladies waited when they came for audiences.

Along the walls of this gallery was ranged a row of bronze busts of all the members of the Romanoff dynasty, looking to my childish eyes unpleasantly stern and life-like. I infinitely preferred the cosy library with its inviting shelves of books, some of which I was allowed to look at, or the small *salon* with its photographs of ships and nautical souvenirs given to my mother by sailors, and its lantern, ingeniously contrived out of the negatives of films, which was lit from the inside.

My first years were uneventful enough, for I was not a strikingly original child in any way. Being the youngest of a family of eight is not conducive to a sense of self-importance and any display of temperament would have been sternly discouraged by my brothers and

sisters. I ate and slept, studied as much as I was obliged, spent most of the day playing with my brother Constantine's eldest son George (afterwards King George II of Greece), who was born two years later than I. We grew to be firm friends and in any dispute always allied ourselves against the rest of the family.

No one could have had a simpler home life than ours. The rigid etiquette that made life a burden to most royal children of our generation was never enforced by my parents. We were not allowed to be conscious of our rank except through the responsibilities it entailed and, consequently, it was not regarded by any of us as a matter for congratulation.

The presiding deity of my nursery was an Englishwoman, Mrs. Long, and she certainly had no false illusions as to the privileges of royal birth. She believed in the good old maxim of implicit obedience to one's elders and any insubordination was rewarded with a ringing box on the ears.

We were taught from our cradles to do everything for ourselves; I soon mastered the art of dressing, but invariably came to grief over the question of shoestrings. I would knot them impatiently in the morning, trusting that they would pass muster, but then came the struggle to undo them in the evening. Calling for help was an admission of defeat, so finally I evolved the easy solution of cutting the knots. This was successful until it dawned upon my nurse that no normal child could need a new pair of shoe-laces every day and my crime was detected.

I was scolded, but without result and, as a last resort, my mother was appealed to. She discussed the situation with the nursery council whilst I listened in suspense, crouched behind the door.

"I don't know what we can do with the child . . ." said my mother. "It is really very expensive to have to buy so many shoe-strings and we cannot afford to go on doing it."

I was enchanted with this new aspect. No more shoe-strings to lace! But then I reflected that my father's attention would certainly be drawn to my gaping boots. Perhaps he would even refuse to take me around the gardens with him! Remorse set in. From that day I wrestled victoriously with my laces.

One of my earliest memories is the death of my sister Alexandra after her son Dimitri's birth. A few years before, all St. Petersburg had been *en fête* for her marriage to the Grand Duke Paul of Russia; the wedding crown of the Imperial Family had never been worn by a lovelier bride.

My only emotion was one of extreme irritation because my parents left immediately for Russia and my nurse cried for a whole day and would not play with me. The word "death" conveyed no meaning to the serene wisdom of three years. My universe was one of life, and although I have learnt many things since then I have not changed my opinion.

Visits to Russia with my mother fulfilled my idea of perfect bliss. I used to lie awake nights before, tasting in anticipation the delights ahead of me. I knew so well what they would be and therefore, like all children, appreciated them all the more, for it is only as we grow older that we seek variety. There is, perhaps, something to be said for the time when repetition never wearied and the story we had heard until we knew it by heart was always the best.

The magnificent Imperial train that waited for us at Sebastopol was one of the thrills of the journey. With its luxuriously upholstered saloons, thick carpets and comfortable dining-car, it appeared a veritable fairy-coach in contrast to the primitive locomotion in Europe. The real beds covered with fine linen sheets and silk eiderdowns were objects of unfailing admiration in my eyes, especially my mother's, which was slung from the ceiling in a kind of net. Our progress was smooth and

stately, for the Russian tracks were all built broad gauge and since the accident to the Emperor Alexander III a few years previously the speed of all Imperial trains had been reduced to twenty miles an hour.

At every station where we stopped there would be officials waiting on the platform to welcome my mother with flowers, fruit and sweets. And after three days of this fascinating travelling we would arrive at Pavlovsk, the house of my mother's father, the Grand Duke Constantine, and I would be clasped in grandmother's arms and told to "go and open the parcel you will find in your bedroom. . . ." That was a glorious moment, for although I had had the tact not to mention it, I had been thinking of this particular parcel all the journey, wondering what I should find in it. Whatever it was it was certain to be something I had wanted, for Grandmother, using that particular instinct common to all grandmothers, invariably guessed right.

She was a very beautiful woman, my grandmother, even in her old age. She had been born a princess of Saxe-Altenburg, a royal house famous for its lovely women, and she was no exception. She was especially proud of her small waist and tiny feet, and to make sure that they should not expand she slept every night in tight corsets and shoes. She had paper-knives in silver and ivory made in the shape of her foot and these she gave as presents to friends and relations.

She spent long hours at her toilet, was always immaculate, with every hair in its place at any hour of the day or night and carried herself as erect as though she had a ramrod down her back.

In her wonderful Russian Court dress she made a beautiful picture.

I remember being taken when I was ten years old, as a special treat, to see the unveiling of a monument to the Emperor Alexander II in Moscow. The whole Court was there in full dress, the Czar and Czarina, the Grand

Dukes and Grand Duchesses. But I could hardly take my eyes off my grandmother, who looked as though she had stepped out of the pages of one of my fairy tales. Her dress was of cloth of gold, cut in the traditional way with a tight-fitting bodice and a train that was yards long. On her head was a gold head-dress called a *kokoschnik*, sewn with jewels, and to this was attached a lace veil that fell down her back and over her train. Like all the other Grand Duchesses and Princesses, she had a page as train-bearer. These pages were all boys of good family, selected from among the students at the military school. They wore a picturesque uniform, consisting of white breeches, black coats with gold braiding and black casques with flowing white horse-hair. I remember that I envied them profoundly.

My mother's father, the Grand Duke Constantine, is rather a shadowy figure. I can only associate him with a sense of fear. A year or two before my first visit to Pavlovsk he had a stroke which rendered him speechless and partially paralysed, so he used to be driven around the park in a little carriage drawn by an old pony. On the morning after our arrival, I, seeing this carriage at the door, seated myself in it intending to drive it myself. A few minutes later he was brought out of the house and, on finding me there, emitted a succession of terrifying shouts. Possibly the poor old man was displeased at seeing me there without permission, more probably he meant to welcome me, but whatever it was I was so frightened that I fled shrieking into the house and could scarcely be persuaded to go near him for days.

He had had a violent temper all his life and now in his old age gave way to gusts of anger that alarmed those around him. Even my grandmother could not always pacify him.

In a house bordering on the Pavlovsk estate lived a lady who had long been the companion of his lighter hours and it was his custom to call on her during his

morning drives. Grandmother did not approve of these visits, which were duly reported by the old coachman who had been in the family for years, but her remonstrances were ignored. Finally she issued strict orders to the doctor and A.D.C. who accompanied him on his drives that under no circumstances was His Imperial Highness to be taken in the direction of the lady's house.

So the next morning grandfather got into the carriage as usual and they started off. Presently he noticed that they were going another route. He shouted loudly, but the coachman took no notice. The doctor and the A.D.C. were apparently absorbed in studying the landscape.

Grandfather shouted still more loudly, hammered with his stick on the carriage door, pointed across the park towards the lady's house. They turned with faces of bland innocence. . . . "Yes, indeed, Your Imperial Highness, the leaves are turning brown very early this year." And the carriage continued serenely on its way.

The more he shouted and gesticulated the less he seemed able to convey his meaning to them. In the end he gave up the attempt and sat in silence. But evidently he was coming to conclusions.

They arrived back from their drive an hour earlier than usual. Grandmother was waiting for them, triumph in her eyes. She walked up to the carriage with a sweet smile of welcome. Grandfather answered it with one equally honeyed. But the moment she came close to him he seized her by the hair and brandished his stick. Before anyone could stop him he gave her a sound beating!

. . . . . .

Pavlovsk had originally been rather a small square house in the Russian Empire style, built by the Emperor Paul for his wife, Marie Feodorovna. Since then it had been extended by two wings forming an enormous horseshoe enclosing a wide courtyard.

All the riches of art and the luxury of the period had gone to its furnishing. Every room contained priceless pictures and historical treasures that would have gladdened the hearts of a museum committee. Rembrandts, Van Dycks and Greuzes hung on the walls, the bronze door-handles were signed Goutières ; the parquet floors were inlaid with marqueterie. All the china was genuine old Sèvres brought back from Paris by the young Grand Duke Paul and his wife, a souvenir of their stay as Comte and Comtesse du Nord at the Court of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette.

There were many traces of Marie Feodorovna's admiration for the unhappy Queen of France. The gardens with their statues and open-air theatres, their dairies and rustic mills and temples strewn about everywhere had evidently been inspired by Versailles.

There was one arched gallery giving on to the garden where we often had meals in the summer. Some years before I was born my grandmother had a terrible experience there.

She was walking through it on her way to dinner one evening, followed by two aides-de-camp, when the three of them saw a woman coming towards them in the distance. She was dressed in white from head to foot, but there was nothing whatever out of the ordinary in her appearance and they supposed her to be one of the ladies of the household. It was only afterwards that they remembered that her footsteps had made no sound. There was still enough light from the fading day coming in through the arches for them to see her quite clearly as she approached.

When she was within a few feet of them she stopped, raised her head and looked straight at my grandmother. None of them could recall her face in detail, they could only say that it was full of indescribable evil and malevolence. Meeting her eyes, Grandmother was so overcome with fear that she stood rooted to the spot, literally

unable to move. Then with one swift spring the woman threw herself upon her as if about to strike her.

At that the two aides-de-camp, who had been petrified with surprise, were galvanised into action and immediately closed in front of Grandmother, with arms outstretched. But to their amazement they found themselves clutching at thin air. There was no trace of the stranger; she had vanished as mysteriously as she had come.

Grandmother, who was half-fainting with fright, was helped back to her apartments, where her ladies-in-waiting revived her. They shuddered when she told them of her experience. . . . "You have seen the White Lady . . ." one of them told her and her heart sank. She had heard, as what princess had not, of the terrible wandering ghost whose story is lost in antiquity and who is associated with no particular country, but appears to the people of royal houses foretelling disaster.

The day after the apparition of the White Lady, Grandmother's youngest son was taken ill. In less than a week he was dead.

The Empress Elizabeth of Austria, on one of her visits to Greece, told my mother that she too had seen the White Lady just before the tragic death of the Archduke Rudolph. The ghost appeared to her in the Palace of Schoenbrunn one evening in much the same circumstances as those in which my grandmother had seen it. "And I know that she will come to me again, before my own death . . ." the Empress added.

I have never heard whether this prophecy was fulfilled or not.

I was a child when the Empress came to Athens and saw her only once or twice, but I remember her more vividly than many people I knew far better. I imagine it was the same with everyone who came in contact with her. Her brilliant, beautiful and restless personality left an indelible impression.

She was so enchanted with Greece that she decided to

build a villa in Corfu. The site she chose could not have been more beautiful, about twelve miles outside the town, set on a high hill overlooking the sea on one side and a chain of mountains on the other. But she was too impatient even to look at the plans and gave the architect *carte blanche*. So instead of the simple cottage she had intended he erected an ornate and hideous palace lavishly adorned with frescoes, statues and bronzes of every description. This atrocity cost the Austrian Government twelve million crowns, I believe.

The Empress's life was dominated by the fear of losing her beauty. As she grew older it became an obsession. Hours were spent every morning brushing the glorious brown hair that she wore gathered into two great plaits coiled around her head.

This hair-brushing was a matter of solemn ritual. Any hairs that fell out during the process were carefully collected and presented to the Empress on a silver salver. If their number proved to be too many the entire day was blackened to her.

Once a captain of a Russian gunboat reported that he had seen a yacht coming into the Piræus harbour with a woman seated on the deck whose mass of hair reached down to the ground while two attendants stood behind her brushing it. " That could only be the Empress of Austria . . ." said my father, when he heard the story.

Later in the day a carriage drove up to the Palace and a mysterious visitor was announced, a lady who refused to give her name. It was, as we expected, the Empress Elizabeth.

She insisted on preserving a strict incognito while she was in Greece, although it seemed rather unnecessary, since everyone knew who she was.

She detested nothing so much as being photographed, or even looked at for that matter, and always carried a large fan with her on her walks, so that she could unfurl it and hide her face from the passers-by.

The Empress was a fine woman in many respects, far finer, I think, than most of her biographers have represented her. Intelligent, intuitive, sensitive, she had all the qualities to make a great empress. But she was tragically lacking in a sense of proportion. Even in the small issues of everyday life she had no idea of moderation. She could not take anything up without making it a mania.

While she was in Corfu she set herself to learn Greek, although she had gone there to rest. Now Greek is a complicated language and its study is hardly to be recommended as a restful pursuit. The Empress certainly did not regard it as such either for herself or any one else, for she wore out her two teachers, Count Mercati and Mr. Christomanos. Every day she walked ten or twelve miles with one or the other, talking Greek all the way and, even during the hair-brushing ceremony, one of them was always present reading to her.

Her figure became another obsession with her. Although she was exaggeratedly slender when she came to Greece (she weighed, I believe, only seven stones) no Hollywood film star could have followed out a more Spartan regime. Her constant dieting made her irritable and depressed. Even when she lunched with my mother and father she would often eat nothing but a salad and some fruit, and she would start off immediately afterwards on one of her exhausting walks, skimming over the ground like a restless, beautiful wraith.

Another memory of my childhood is of the earthquake in Greece in 1894. Since then I have been through several, but that one, although not the most severe, was more nerve-wracking than the others for it lasted on and off for a fortnight.

The most curious fact of it was that it began on Good Friday, just at the precise moment when the Gospel for

the day was being read in churches throughout the land. Thousands of people were listening to the words : " and the earth shook and the veil of the Temple was rent in twain," when they felt the ground heaving beneath their feet and saw stone pillars swaying above them.

In the densely packed churches at Athens there were appalling scenes, for dozens of people were trampled to death in the wild rush for the doors. The panic did far more danage than the earthquake for the massive stone buildings held.

I know of nothing more profoundly terrifying than an earthquake. The strange, breathless hush that precedes it, with never a leaf stirring in the trees ; the sea absolutely calm and ominous-looking ; the melancholy howling of dogs ; the sense of fear that seems to communicate itself to all living things, obedient to some deep, primeval instinct. And then the finale—the mighty rumbling like the groaning of some vast monster in travail, the sickening heaving and crumbling of the ground ; the screams of men and women ; the crash of buildings uprooted in the pangs of an earth that has lived through too many æons to take count of the human beings who make their puny little habitations upon it.

I saw my first earthquake from the shelter . . . for so it seemed to me then . . . of my father's study. I remember standing on the sofa in a white *piqué* dress and blue sash, with his arm held firmly around me, trembling from head to foot yet with entire faith in his power to defend me.

I was only five years old, of course, and saw him as the Supreme Being of my small world, but he inspired this same feeling of confidence in all who knew him.

In the first years of his reign he had encountered many difficulties, for the position of the adopted King is rather like that of the adopted child, killed with kindness one moment and blamed for alien characteristics the next. He realised it himself. His favourite axiom to us was :

"You must never forget that you are foreigners in this country, but you must make them forget it."

He was only a boy of eighteen, still at the Naval Cadet School of Copenhagen, when he was sent for by his great-uncle, King Frederick VII of Denmark, and told that a deputation from Athens had come to offer him the Crown of Greece and that he must accept it.

Now this same Crown had rather lost value through having been hawked around Europe unsuccessfully for some months. The experience of King Otho, the only ruler the Greeks had had since their emancipation from four hundred years of subjection to the yoke of Turkey, was not calculated to inspire optimism, for his reign had been stormy from the day of his accession in 1833 to his dethronement thirty years later. Internal political intrigues on the one hand and the interference of the great protecting powers, France, England and Russia, on the other, had rendered his task impossible.

Finding a successor, therefore, was no easy matter. The Crown had been offered to Queen Victoria's son, the Duke of Edinburgh, and to Belgian and German princes in turn, but all of them had refused it.

Then the Greek National Assembly, urged on by the protecting powers, decided to make one more attempt and a delegation was despatched to Copenhagen to invite Prince William, son of Prince Christian of Denmark, nephew of the King, to ascend the Throne.

My father wanted to refuse it, as the other princes had done. The prospect of ruling a distant country and a turbulent people whose language he could not even speak was not enthralling. Besides, it meant abandoning his chosen career in the Navy and he was a born sailor, loving the sea above all things.

His father, too, was in favour of refusal, but the stubborn old King was adamant. There were hard words between him and his nephew . . . "I tell you my boy shall not be forced into going to Greece . . ."

" Very well, then, if you don't allow him to go I'll have you shot. . . ."

They sent for William, put the position to him. He listened quietly to all they had to say. " I should like to think it over for an hour . . ." he said.

So he went into the garden and there fought out his battle all alone, gave up for ever the peace and security of Denmark, his cherished dream of the sea.

The next day the Greek deputation was received by King Frederick at the Palace and the Throne was formally accepted by Prince William of Denmark, who took the title of King George I of the Hellenes.

He looked very handsome at the ceremony, my grandmother told me long afterwards, tall and erect in his Danish Admiral's uniform and older and more serious than his years. He gave no sign of the effort the decision had cost him.

He went to his new kingdom on October, 1863, and set himself to learn the language and the customs of his subjects. For the first four years of his reign he never left the country. Instead he travelled about, mixing freely with all classes of people.

He had brought several Danish advisers with him, among them Count Sponeck, but he did not keep him long, for the old statesman was too inclined to be dictatorial. The Greeks resented his assumption of superiority and my father considered that loyalty to Greece came before everything else. He never permitted any one to criticise his Ministers and we were never allowed to talk politics at home. Very wisely he refused to mix in party disputes, for love of political intrigue is the undoing of the Greek.

From the first he showed a great understanding of his subjects. They were not always trustworthy, but he trusted them implicitly, and his very confidence won their hearts.

He was a born ruler, for he had force of character



PRINCE CHRISTOPHER'S GRANDFATHER, THE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE, AND *right* HIS WIFE, THE GRAND DUCHESS ELIZABETH IN BRIDAL ATTIRE

and was not afraid of showing it, felt strongly on all subjects and never hesitated to express his opinion, no matter what the cost. He had an instinct for statesmanship and was the friend of the greatest statesmen of his day, yet in all his dealings he was the soul of sincerity. The humblest of his subjects knew that they could appeal to him direct. He used to go into the homes of his people, talk to them like one of themselves, give his advice when they asked for it, settle their problems when he could.

No man ever worked harder than he did. His day was never shorter than ten hours and more likely to run into twelve or even twenty-four when there was any crisis to be faced.

He got up at seven-thirty every morning and went through his correspondence until breakfast, which was at 9.30. After that came conferences with the domestic staff, accounts were gone into, directions were issued for the entertainment of guests. Then he went to his study and spent the rest of the morning receiving his Ministers and giving audiences. He would often receive fifty to sixty people before luncheon, for any one who wanted to see him had only to write his name in the audience-book and the appointment would be made.

In the afternoon, if there was not a hospital or school to open or a public meeting to attend, there was more correspondence to be dealt with. Secretaries handled the routine work, but my father preferred to write most of his letters himself. He generally managed to have a free hour or so in the day when he went out walking or riding with one of us. In the early years of their marriage my mother always rode with him, then her eyesight got too bad and my sister Minnie took her place.

My father never had a police bodyguard in his life. When he walked out into the city it was with one of us or with an A.D.C.

In 1898 an attempt was made to assassinate him when he was driving in a carriage with my sister Minnie.

Suddenly two men sprang from the sidewalk into the road, crouched there with their rifles and opened fire on them. A bullet whizzed through the coachman's hat, another grazed the leg of the footman.

Minnie, overcome with curiosity, leant out to investigate. Father seized her by the neck and with one hand held her down in the bottom of the carriage while with the other he shook his stick angrily at his assailants.

The coachman's presence of mind saved the situation, for he whipped up his horses and got out of range before any one was injured. The would-be assassins were caught, tried and found to be fanatical anarchists.

The only result of the incident was to make the King far more popular in Greece than he had ever been before. The people built a church upon the spot where the attempt had been made on his life and great crowds gave thanks for his deliverance.

My mother always kept the ring of harness through which the bullet had passed. She was always tormented by fears for his safety, although she never spoke of them.

No marriage was ever more truly one of love than that of my parents. My father was only twenty-two when, acting on the entreaties of his councillors, who urged the necessity of a queen for the country, he went to Russia to find a wife. But the one he selected was the little fifteen-year-old Grand Duchess Olga, still in the schoolroom, whom he only met by chance one day when he was visiting her parents. From that moment his fate was sealed. A few months later they were married. The bride was such a child that she brought a whole family of dolls with her to her new country.

For the entry into Athens she wore a little dress in the Greek colours of blue and white, and the crowds in the street shouted themselves hoarse in welcome. Her shy youth and beauty conquered their impressionable hearts that day and, through all the vicissitudes of our house, she at least never lost their love.

CHAPTER II

VISITS TO DENMARK—KAISER WILHELM AT CORFU

OUR household was a Tower of Babel. My parents spoke German to one another and English to us children, except to my brother Andrew, who flatly refused to speak anything but Greek. We spoke Greek in the nursery and schoolroom. My sister-in-law, daughter of Prince Roland Bonaparte, spoke French to everybody; my brother Nicholas' wife, Grand Duchess Helen of Russia, spoke Russian to my mother and English to the rest of the family. Our Danish and Russian relations, when they came to stay, made conversation still more versatile. One relation who came to visit us off and on was my mother's cousin, Princess Therese of Bavaria, who amazed everyone with her erudition; she could speak twenty different languages and answered freely in any one she happened to be addressed in. She was an extremely interesting personality, a well-known scientist and great explorer; there were few parts of the globe she had not visited, hunting for flora and fauna.

My mother, like all Russians, was a born linguist. When she arrived in Greece she spoke neither Greek nor English, but in less than a year she had mastered both. She must have passed some of her talent on to us, for I can say with absolute truth and without " swank " that we all speak five to six languages fairly fluently. Russian came to me naturally, having to speak it to my cousins on my visits to Russia, while my first Italian words were picked up through hearing my English nurse and

Marianna, the nursery-maid from Corfu, speaking it to one another.

This gift of tongues came in very handy when, every summer, we went to my father's old home in Denmark, for the entire family of uncles, aunts, cousins and other various relations by marriage used to gather there, and at least half a dozen nationalities were represented.

Our grandparents, King Christian IX and Queen Louise, loved nothing better than these reunions at one of their country castles, Bernstorff or Fredensborg, when they could lead the ideal patriarchal life so dear to their hearts, amid their six sons and daughters, with their respective wives, husbands and innumerable children; the world might know them as middle-aged kings, queens and princes—they saw them still as their children, to be praised or scolded when occasion arose.

My father, who was not prone to take advice readily, would listen with humility while Grandfather talked and propounded his views on politics. Queen Alexandra, then Princess of Wales, received many a lecture on the subject of managing a husband!

Yet we, the thirty-six grandchildren who composed the younger generation, had no awe of "Apapa" and "Amama," as we called our grandparents. They delighted in spoiling us, after the fashion of grandparents the world over; we knew it and we wheedled almost anything out of them when the spirit moved us. The discovery that my father, hitherto infallible as the Deity, actually feared Grandfather was a surprise not unmixed with unholy pleasure to me! It demanded a complete readjustment of my philosophy.

King Christian had a mechanical piano which became my greatest joy. One morning I rushed to it directly we had all got up from the breakfast-table and began to play, much to my father's annoyance, who sternly ordered me to stop. I was retreating in confusion when Grandfather came to the rescue. . . . "The child shall do as he

likes," he said. Then, turning to me: "Go ahead and play." I did, but with a burning face and some secret misgivings. I could not help wondering what would happen if Father should recall the incident inconveniently when we were back in Greece, without Grandfather to champion me. But the affair was never mentioned again.

Those weeks in Denmark were regarded by all of us as a glorious holiday. The grown-ups left the cares of State behind them, the children were released from the schoolroom. My grandfather not only encouraged us in our escapades but joined in them himself. There was an elderly lady-in-waiting of my grandmother's whom we loved to tease. She had a long nose, very red, with an upturned tip which fascinated me. One evening, during dinner, I stared at her until inspiration came. Stealthily I shook out a little pepper into my hand and blew it in her direction; a few seconds later she was convulsed with sneezing!

My cousin, Princess Victoria of England, next to whom I was sitting, saw my manœuvre, and the two of us giggled until Grandfather leant over and asked to be told the joke. In spite of my imploring glances, Victoria told him and, much to my relief, instead of the reprimand I expected, he burst out laughing. Then, taking up his own container of Cayenne pepper, he too tried the same experiment on the old lady, but instead of holding out his palm horizontally, he cupped his hand, the result being that it all went up his own nose. So there they both were, sneezing until they cried! But I got into hot water afterwards with my father for leading Grandfather astray; nevertheless he had a naughty twinkle in his eye, for no one enjoyed a joke more than he.

I must here admit, to my eternal shame, that this happened long after my grandmother's death, when I was already grown up and supposed to have attained the age of discretion and reason.

My grandmother died when I was very young, but I still remember her well; white-haired and angelic-looking, being wheeled around her rose garden in a bath-chair with a pair of shears in her hand. She adored her roses and the one deadly sin in her eyes was for any one of us, except my sister Minnie, to gather them without her permission.

She was a gentle little lady who preferred to rule her own home to a kingdom. She could have reigned alone in Denmark, for the Crown descended to her, but instead she ceded it to her husband, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein. She remembered everyone's anniversary, knew everybody's likes and dislikes in food and presided with a beaming face at the luncheon-table.

We children loved the informality of these luncheons. There were no servants in the room and everything was kept hot in chafing dishes on a sideboard. We got plates, knives and forks from a side-table and then we took what food we wanted from a bewildering assortment of dishes.

One of the dishes I liked best was a soup called *ölbröd*. It was served for breakfast and is known only in Denmark. It was made of black bread and black beer boiled together, and you ate it out of a soup plate which you had previously lined with brown sugar. Over it you poured thick cream. Written down on paper it sounds like a fearful concoction, but actually it was delicious. Another thing we all loved was a sort of raspberry jelly, eaten with cream, also a Danish speciality. It all sounds very greedy, no doubt, but to this day the mere thought of those excellent dishes makes my mouth water!

Dinner was a very formal affair, with the Master of the Household arranging the seating and everyone entering the great dining-hall arm in arm in a stately procession, on the stroke of 6.30. Afterwards we all dispersed to each other's rooms, to meet again in the drawing-room at nine o'clock for tea and various other kinds of refreshment. Then "Loo" was played, a curious old

card game which has been popular for centuries at various Courts of Europe.

I used to try to attach myself to my Aunt Alix (as we called the Princess of Wales) after dinner, for of all the relations she was my favourite, perhaps because she was the most beautiful person in my small world. Even after all these years I remember her as I saw her then, the grace of her every movement, the sweetness of her smile. No woman ever possessed to greater degree that indefinable quality known as charm. That, combined with beauty, will turn anyone's head, unless they be made of stone. Everyone who knew her came under its spell, grown-ups as well as children, for she could talk to either with equal fascination. She was very witty, brilliant in repartee and a wonderful mimic, yet her wit was never cruel. She was my father's favourite sister; they never failed to write one another at least once a week if not more, right up to the day of his death.

Aunt Minnie, the Empress Marie Feodorovna of Russia, was a smaller and less beautiful edition of her sister; she had the same charm, the same tact, but had more strength of character. Although she was small she could enter a room so majestically that everyone would stop talking and turn to look at her. She was a great smoker, but wanted no one to know it but the family, so if anyone else entered the room she would immediately hide her cigarette behind her back, oblivious of the clouds of smoke arising like incense.

Her husband, Emperor Alexander III, whom we called Uncle Sacha, was about six feet five in height and colossally strong. He was a great favourite with us children, for he was kind and jolly and could do all sorts of tricks, such as tearing up an entire pack of cards with his strong hands, or bending a silver plate like cardboard.

One summer at Fredensborg my older brothers and the cousins organised a cycling club, and the Emperor was unanimously elected president. They drew up a

formal document in French explaining that, although they supposed he would be too fat to ride a bicycle, they wanted to offer him the honour of leading the club. Although he pretended to be furious, he nevertheless accepted with great pride.

He loved playing practical jokes and was always surprised if people resented his teasing. Once, during one of the family meetings in Denmark, his nephews gave him a garden squirt as a birthday present. He was trying it out the next morning when he spied King Oscar of Sweden impeccably turned out, in frock-coat and top-hat, coming up the path with the King of Denmark. The temptation proved too much for him, so he turned the squirt in King Oscar's direction and drenched him from head to foot, much to the amusement of the Prince of Wales, who was looking out of the window. The one person who certainly did not enjoy the joke was the King. Although the Emperor apologised, he never really forgave him.

My father's third sister, Aunt Thyra, the Duchess of Cumberland, used also to come to these family reunions with her husband and children. We were all very fond of Uncle Ernst, as the Duke was called, but he also got teased unmercifully. He had an elongated body and an enormously long neck, surmounted by a delightfully flat face with practically no nose worth mentioning. He hated having to dress for dinner whenever he visited his parents-in-law; he never wanted to wear anything but his beloved shooting costume which consisted of a short Tyrolese jacket, leather shorts which left his knees bare, and heavy hobnail boots. He used to sit stiff and uncomfortable all through dinner in his boiled shirt and tails, with a collar so short it hardly could be qualified as such, around which he would wind an evening tie not much wider than an ordinary shoe string.

Uncle Freddie, the Crown Prince and later King Frederick VIII, also got bitten by the cycling craze.

He had been in possession of his machine only about a week when he went riding along a highroad bordered by a deep ditch, on the other side of which was a sidewalk. All went well until two old ladies walking towards him recognised him and started to curtsey. Unfortunately, when he took his hand off the handle-bar to raise his hat, the bicycle got out of control, leapt the ditch and landed on the sidewalk; a second later the poor old ladies were lying in the ditch with the Crown Prince and his machine on top of them.

He was not the only victim of the cycling mania. One day Queen Maud of Norway, Princess Victoria, the Grand Duke Michael and I were going for a ride on horseback in the Bernstorff woods. We had just started and were leisurely riding along the high road when suddenly a woman of about fifty flew down the hill on a bicycle and collided violently with the railings of the sidewalk, where she remained hanging by her chin. The Grand Duke jumped gallantly off his horse, giving me his reins to hold, and picked her up. She gasped, painfully: "Where is Mama?" None of us could tell her. "She has just begun bicycling and I don't know what will happen to her . . ." the daughter was continuing agitatedly when a second bicycle came careering down the hill. On it was seated an old woman, aged at least seventy, in a tightly buttoned bodice and poke bonnet. The pedals were revolving madly under two fat legs which stuck out helplessly. Hair flying, eyes staring straight into space as if she were just about to meet her Maker, she drove her machine straight between her unsuspecting daughter's legs, who was turning her back on her impending doom! I omitted to say that the first bicycle had gone on by itself and was enjoying a well-earned rest in a ditch a few hundred yards farther down the hill. The Grand Duke managed to disentangle the family, bruised and shaken but undaunted. "I'm going to learn to ride that darn thing if it takes the rest of my

life," said Mama with determination, and her daughter nodded a bruised and battered head in agreement!

The long summer days passed lazily and happily in Denmark. One never realises until it's all too late how absolutely happy one's childhood can be!

I once remarked to my mother, after some trivial schoolroom storm: "Oh! if only I were grown up." "Remember these years, you will always think back on them as the happiest in your life," she answered. How often have I thought of those words!

The grown-ups, who would not be eternally bothered with playing with the children, would occupy themselves with their private affairs. The men would go riding or driving, joined more often than not by some of the women; the Queen of Denmark, with her three daughters, would practise eight-handed arrangements on two pianos. Prince Waldemar's wife, Princess Marie of Orléans, had a passion for riding and tried out every horse in the stables. She was the most entertaining and delightful person, always up to anything. She had an exceptional talent for painting and modelling, and modelled many animals in clay which were reproduced in china by the famous Copenhagen factory. But to return to her riding. There was a huge prize bull on the farm. Nothing would do but she needs must have it saddled! It was done, and she rode the enormous animal up and down the lawn in front of the house! We of the younger generation had been given bicycles on which we used to scour the surrounding country, coming home for meals, dusty, dishevelled, with a nice crop of new bruises. It is amusing and at the same time there is an undercurrent of tragedy, when one thinks that five of those harum-scarum cousins, so full of the joy of living, later ascended thrones. Aunt Minnie's son became the ill-fated Emperor Nicholas II of Russia; Aunt Alix's son became King George V of England; my brother, Constantine, was King of Greece; Uncle Freddie's

son is now King Christian X of Denmark, and his brother Charles is the present King Haakon VII of Norway. Only two of that gay crowd are alive to-day, so let us thank God that the future is hidden from us!

Fredensborg had a beautiful park which was open to the public on certain days of the week. As it was very extensive visitors were constantly losing themselves in the labyrinth of paths.

One afternoon my father, the Emperor of Russia, and the Prince of Wales were walking there when they were accosted by a man who asked them to show him the way out. They accompanied him all the way to the gates, talking of the weather, crops and politics as they went.

When finally they parted at the gates, the stranger thanked them, adding: "I've very much enjoyed my walk with you gentlemen and I hope we shall meet again; may I ask for your names?" "Certainly," said my father, "I'm the King of Greece, this is the Prince of Wales, and this is the Emperor of Russia." The poor man must have thought he had struck a lunatic asylum instead of Fredensborg Castle, for a look of horror overspread his smiling countenance: "And I am Jesus Christ," said he, and fled for his life, followed by their laughter, which must have sounded ghoulish to him.

My grandfather also had an amusing experience at Fredensborg. There was a young sentry on duty at the door of the castle, a recruit from the country. He had been instructed to allow no one to enter and had taken his orders literally. So when the King returned from a stroll in the garden he was sternly ordered away. "But I live here," he explained, "I am the King." "Anyone can say that," answered the sentry, sceptically, "but all the same, you'd better get out of here before I make you!"

An A.D.C. happened to arrive at the opportune moment and the King got home.

Autumn found us back in Greece again, where I was handed over to my Swiss tutor, Robert Stucker, Doctor of Philosophy, who survived the painful duty of educating me for many years and finally became my equerry. Professors from the University taught me Greek, ancient and modern (I could rattle off most of the Odyssey like a parrot), history, geography, literature and mathematics. I used to go to the University laboratory for chemistry, which amused me highly.

My schoolroom was more suited to a class of fifty than one small boy and a tutor. It was enormous, like all the rooms in the Palace. Bare white walls, with maps hanging about, a china stove and two desks, one for my tutor and one for me. Do not let us forget the blackboard and a set of hideous furniture still dating from the time of King Otho. I was hiked out of bed every morning at six for the detested cold tub; baths did not exist in those days. I dare say it is excellent discipline, but to this day I am still grateful to be able to get up when I like and to enjoy a real warm bath! After an early breakfast I had lessons from 7 to 9.30, when I went down for the regular breakfast with my father and whomever else of the family happened to be there. My mother had hers in her room. At 10 lessons would start again and continue until 12, when I would rush downstairs to the gym., which was in the garden. There I would meet the present King, who was less than two years younger than I, therefore much more of a brother, and we would start physical exercises and gymnastics, supervised by a German instructor. Fencing was also included. Then another wild rush for home and lunch, which was a family affair.

At 2 lessons would start again until 4, then an outing and back again at that darned desk for the preparation of next day's torture! At 7.30 Papa and Mama were bidden good night and so to bed . . . only to begin all over again next day.

This went on until about the age of fourteen, when I joined my elders and betters at dinner, being packed off to bed at 10 sharp, and my ! what a row there would be upstairs if I was a few minutes overdue !

At the same time I began attending the military school, twice a week, for drill, as my brothers had done before me. We all enjoyed this as it meant getting to know other boys of our own age. My brother Andrew became quite friendly with another boy in his class, named Pangalos. The latter's friendship could not have gone very deep, for years later, when he became dictator of Greece, he showed a strong inclination to have his erstwhile friend and comrade shot !

When I came of age I joined the First Infantry Regiment, not because I had any special aptitude or liking for the Army, but simply because it was the tradition in the family that each boy should join either the Army or the Navy. So I began in the ranks of the Military School and gradually passed through the grades of corporal, sergeant and sergeant-major, until I emerged as a lieutenant. My real hobby was playing the piano, which I had studied along with my other lessons; I might have become quite good at it had I had more leisure.

My sisters were educated by governesses and by professors from the University, with special teachers for music and painting. Their training was as strict as ours, for schoolroom discipline was supervised by our father, whom none of us would have dreamed of disobeying. Yet we all loved him deeply, as did everybody who came into contact with him. He had such a true and deep understanding of us all, such a keen sense of humour; no one could be a more delightful companion.

His keen eyes never seemed to miss anything. No use for us to try to slip away from tedious Court functions, hoping to have a quiet little smoke in the corridor, for his eagle eye would detect some stealthy movement

behind him and he would call to us just as we were reaching the door. His eyes would twinkle as we sneaked sheepishly back again, even though he might appear completely absorbed in the weighty conversation of some elderly statesman.

Athens, on the whole, was perhaps one of the most democratic towns in Europe. Everyone wanted it clearly understood that he was just as good as his neighbour. There were no titles and practically no social distinctions. Except, of course, if you happened to be the Prime Minister or the Archbishop or some general or admiral, etc. etc. All of us were—and still are, for that matter—referred to by our first names, minus the handle of R.H. "Here comes George, or Nicholas," and so forth, they would call loudly to each other, when they saw any one of us in the streets. Almost everybody went to the Court Ball. At one of them a lady was presented to my brother Constantine, whose face seemed vaguely familiar to him. He was wondering where he had seen her before when he suddenly realised that she was the daughter of his valet who had married Jane, one of the English nursery-maids. The girl, having married a naval officer, had a perfect right to be presented at Court.

Another time a foreigner, staying at the hotel, hired a carriage to drive him to the Palace. "Do you mind going rather early," the coachman stipulated . . . "because I'm going to the Court Ball myself and shall have to go home and change?" The gentleman laughed at what he thought was a good joke; but sure enough, later in the evening, he saw his former driver, resplendent in evening clothes, dancing with the wife of a Minister!

My Russian grandmother detailed one of her ladies-in-waiting to accompany my mother to Greece, for the purpose of training the new ladies who were expected to wait on her. It was rather a hard task for her to start the ball rolling in a place which had not known a Court

for several years, in fact, not since the departure of King Otho and Queen Amelia. She remained in Greece for about two years, after having accomplished her duty.

State banquets were a source of anguish to my brothers and me, for they sadly taxed our conversational powers. There were two dinners a week during the winter season. Once a week it would be for the diplomatic corps, each legation being invited according to precedence, with secretaries and wives; the next one would be for the members of the Government "in" at the moment, the deputies or the Synod. We might have enjoyed the dinners, which were excellent, and the military band, which played lustily while the meal was going on, had it not been for the ordeal ahead of us.

Immediately dinner was over everybody filed out into the Blue Room, the ladies on one side, the men on the other; no one ever sat down. My mother would go over to the ladies' side and my father to the men's; then a slow progress would begin down the lines, with a stop of a few moments, to enable them to make a few appropriate and well-chosen remarks to each person. That is what is called in French *faire le cercle*. When they reached the end of the line they would change sides and begin again.

Unfortunately, this ceremony was not limited to the King and Queen. Any of the family present were expected to follow them and make an independent progress behind. One had to cudgel one's brains thinking up suitable phrases for these unnatural conversations, for the guests stood so close together that the next of the family in line was forced to produce some variety in small-talk. It could be quite amusing, though, if people one knew were there; one generally, in that case, had a prearranged conversation. I, being the youngest, was almost always spared the ordeal for, when it came to my turn, the others would have finished and were taking polite farewell of the guests.

Balls at the Palace began at 10, after a *cercle diplomatique*. The Ball was opened by my father and mother dancing a State quadrille with the "doyen" and "doyenne" of the diplomatic corps. Afterwards ordinary dancing followed—valses, polkas and the dances that were then in fashion. Etiquette demanded that princesses should ask for their partners and ladies-in-waiting or courtiers were sent to bring the person of their passing fancy up to them. My sister Minnie was rather unfortunate in her choice of a partner at one of these Court balls. She sent for a young officer, whom we all knew. He, however, did not have the courage to tell her that valsing made him giddy. He started off with much gusto, but, as the dance continued, he clutched her ever more tightly to his heart until at last his excellent dinner returned and finished in her *décolletée ! ! !* She went back to her room to change, whereas he was never seen again ! Supper was a stately affair for the diplomatic corps and government officials, who sat down at tables in the State apartments. The rest of the guests had to scramble for places, either in other rooms or in a huge tent which was set up in one of the courtyards. This tent had been given to my father by Menelik, Emperor of Abyssinia. It was embroidered in every colour of the rainbow and was an unfailing source of admiration to the guests.

Besides the Palace in Athens we had two country places. One was Tatoi, fifteen miles from the capital, a big estate that my father had bought at the beginning of his reign, with a home farm from which we got all our eggs, butter, etc. We children just loved it. It was the one place where we could live a real home life and forget, for a short time, that we were not supposed to be ordinary human beings !

There was Mon Repos at Corfu, which had been given to my father when he first came to Greece. It was a



PRINCE CHRISTOPHER'S PARENTS AND SOME OF HIS BROTHERS AND SISTERS

King George I and Queen Olga (*seated*); Prince Nicholas, Prince George, Crown Prince Constantine and Princess Alexandra (*standing behind*); Princess Marie and Prince Andrew (*in front*).

lovely place which had been built by the English as a Governor's residence in the days when these islands belonged to England. One of the conditions of my father's accepting the Throne of Greece was that these seven islands, headed by Corfu, should be restored to their mother country, a move which added greatly to his popularity.

It is right over the sea, and was an unfailing delight to us children.

Kaiser William II always came to the "Achilleion," which he had bought from the Emperor of Austria, during the middle of April. My father generally arranged to be there at the same time, or to get there just a day or two before him. Once my mother, knowing there was not much love lost between the two, asked: "Why on earth do you always go to Corfu to meet the Kaiser? You know you can't stand him." "If I don't," said my father shortly, "he'll think he's the King of Greece."

There was a distinct chilliness between our families, due to the wresting of Holstein from Denmark by Prussia in 1864. The older generation hated each other heartily and at the same time were frightfully polite! The one who was certainly not over-cordial was the late Dowager Empress of Russia, Marie Feodorovna. She bitterly resented the Kaiser's treatment of her at the outset of the World War, when she passed through Berlin. All very futile, no doubt, like all our small hatreds, personal or political, in the scheme of the universe!

Nevertheless, the Kaiser was lavishly entertained by my parents and we were asked out to his place very often. The yacht *Hohenzollern* played quite a part, too, in his entertaining.

He always described his stay in Corfu as "my favourite way of leading the simple life," though it certainly did not give us the impression of anything simple. He always

brought with him an army of generals, equerries and A.D.C.'s.

Every motor drive was a procession of Imperial cars, the All-Highest leading, followed by countless members of his suite. My mother, who loathed heights and whom nothing would induce to motor over those precipitous mountain roads, gave her sympathy and everlasting friendship to an unfortunate aged general who, she was told afterwards, emitted such piercing screams from the last car, rounding a corner, that the Emperor heard him. All the same, he was always taken on those drives.

The perils of the road were not the only trials the Kaiser's suite had to bear.

At that time he had a positive mania for archæology, and, as it happened, a famous German professor managed to hit upon a very interesting discovery in Corfu. A labourer, ploughing in a field near "Mon Repos," struck something hard. He took his fork, dug down into the earth not more than two feet and disclosed the head of a lion. Excavations were immediately begun, and an ancient temple with an exquisite primitive frieze of gorgons, fighting lions, was discovered.

The Kaiser hurried to the scene of action and for many days after that never left it while the daylight lasted. He used to sit on a wooden chair, well placed for watching the digging, while his suite stood about for hours on end, pretending an absorbing interest in the operations.

One day one of the legs of his chair sank into the soft earth and he flew over backwards with his feet in the air, in full view of the bystanders. As fate would have it, our entire family happened to be there on that day, for we would often go to follow the progress of the works. All of us, family, Court and anyone attached thereto, vanished to give vent to our mirth; except my sister Minnie and my niece Helen, now Princess of Roumania, who remained behind and gave a display of unholy glee.

The Kaiser, though, took it well and with a real sense of humour: "What a pity neither of you has got a Kodak," he said, "I have never been photographed in this position before."

The Emperor had evidently a deep-rooted conviction that the habit of cleanliness needed encouragement in Greece, for his presents to the peasants in the district always took the form of tooth-brushes and combs for the adults and cakes of soap, made in the shape of Easter-eggs, for the children! Unfortunately the infants always imagined these wonderful eggs to be made of sugar and bit into them with pleasant anticipation! Wails of anguish and disappointment would rend the air when the mistake was found out. But next spring the cleaning campaign would recommence with undiminished ardour.

Yet few people can talk more intelligently on any given subject and analyse it more deeply and philosophically than the Kaiser; his charm is stupendous, when he chooses to exert it!

CHAPTER III

RUSSIA—RASPUTIN—FORGOTTEN JEWELS

AFTER the simplicity of our life in Athens visits to Russia were like stepping into the world of fairy tales, a land of centuries-old traditions, a civilisation still deeply rooted in the past, mediæval in its sudden contrasts of vast riches and desperate poverty, feudal in its relations between ruler and people.

The Imperial Court was the most magnificent in Europe. There was something still barbaric in its splendour; its ceremonies were based on those of the old Byzantine Empire and reminded one of the glory of Catherine the Great and of the French eighteenth century.

Money was poured out like water; nothing was too costly to give even a moment's pleasure. The Emperor had the inexhaustible revenues of a mighty Empire to draw upon; the great families had incomes that ran into millions. So carriage rugs were of ermine and sable, harnesses shone with gold and silver trappings, luxury trades of every description flourished and artists and musicians came from all over the world, sure of finding patrons. Underneath it was an unrest that crept about silently in the dark like a furtive beast, only raising its head now and again, until at length it struck and overthrew the entire social system.

The Palace of Tsarskoe Selo was the most beautiful in Europe, a storehouse of treasures. Plates of old Chinese porcelain, whose value was literally beyond price and which had formed part of a collection presented

to Catherine the Great by the Emperor of China of her day, were inlaid into the solid amber walls of one room; another room was walled in rarest lapis lazuli. The great banqueting-hall which ran the whole width of the Palace, two stories high, was of blue and silver and lighted only by thousands of candles.

The picturesque Abyssinian guard always stood at the door on State occasions, six coal-black negroes presented to the Czar by Menelik, Emperor of Abyssinia. Tall, splendidly built, in their wide trousers and scarlet turbans, they stood immobile as though they had been cast in bronze.

The rich furniture, the exquisite setting of the rooms, blended harmoniously with the brilliant uniforms of the men, the lovely old traditional Court dresses of the women.

All the Grand Dukes had their own separate Courts and their own colours, and the mistresses of the robes, ladies-in-waiting and maids of honour in attendance on the Grand Duchesses were dressed in the colours of whatever Court they were attached to. When they were all assembled together for the great festivals as, for instance, of Easter, Epiphany and the Benediction of the Waters, the general effect was like a scene from the Middle Ages.

The costumes blazed with jewels whose value must have run into millions of pounds, necklaces of diamonds so large that they looked fantastic and too good to be true; rubies and emeralds as big as pigeons' eggs set into the traditional head-dresses. Every great family had its own priceless collection of historic stones amassed through centuries, jewels that had been the gift of an Emperor in recognition of some service or had formed part of the dowry of a bride. The Crown Jewels were the finest in the world.

Wedding festivities were the most spectacular ceremonies at the Imperial Court. After the banquet a

Polonaise was danced, led by the Emperor, whose partner was the bride, while the Empress danced with the bridegroom . . . if one could use the word " dance " of so stately a measure. Actually it was a sort of processional walk set to the music of Glinka. In those surroundings the effect was beautiful.

The Hermitage, annexe of the Winter Palace, famous for its collection of pictures, was the scene of the wonderful costume balls, which were a feature of the Russian Court. One of the most beautiful was held in 1903, when the whole Court wore the Russian dress of the early seventeenth century. Nearly all the guests represented their own ancestors, and many of the costumes worn were heirlooms handed down from generation to generation. It was like the setting of an opera. Only the diplomats of the various embassies were out of the picture; they felt naked and unadorned in their prosaic modern attire and displayed a tendency to hide themselves in distant corners.

At all the great banquets a Court official stood behind the chair of every royal guest to hand the champagne for the toasts. This was a matter of solemn ritual. The wine was first poured out by a footman, then it had to be passed to a page who, in turn, passed it to the hander. The page was young and impressionable (those allotted to Queen Marie of Roumania had to be changed every other day, as they invariably fell in love with her) and more interested in the general proceedings than in what he was doing. The hander was usually distinguished, aged and tremulous, so between them they managed, as often as not, to upset the contents of the glass all over you. I can still remember my sister's distress when her favourite pale blue velvet Court dress turned a vivid green in patches after her hander had spilt six glasses of champagne over it.

Of all the women at the Russian Court the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, wife of the Grand Duke Serge, was

the loveliest. She and her sister, the Czarina, who were Princesses of Hesse and granddaughters of Queen Victoria, had the same delicacy of feature and richness of colouring, but Elizabeth was the more beautiful of the two. At the State balls she outshone every other woman in the splendour of her gowns and jewels. When the ball was at her own house she had a habit of disappearing at midnight to change into a new dress and another set of jewels, then she would return to the ball-room more resplendent than before.

The Grand Duke Serge was Governor of Moscow and had a palace in the city and a country home outside. I loved staying with them there, for they had taken my sister Alexandra's children to live with them after her death and the three of us used to have many a game together. My niece, the Grand Duchess Marie, was only eighteen months younger than I and her brother Dimitri three years younger.

No one could have been more gifted by the gods than the Grand Duchess Elizabeth was, yet, perhaps, as the saying goes, " she had too much beauty for good luck," for her life was one of sorrow. She was still young when her husband was killed by a Nihilist bomb. In the midst of her grief she had the forgiveness of spirit to intercede with the Czar for the life of the young student who had murdered him. And when, in spite of her efforts, he was sentenced to execution, she went to see him in prison and promised to look after his mother, which promise she faithfully kept, for she never failed to send sufficient money for her needs as long as she lived.

After the death of her husband Elizabeth retired into a convent she had founded, and lived there quietly, forgotten by the world, until the Revolution, when the convent was sacked by the Bolsheviks and she was dragged out and imprisoned in Siberia with other members of the Imperial Family.

One morning the Red Guards came into the room

where they were all herded together and told them to get ready for a journey. "Where to?" they asked, hoping that they were to be sent back to St. Petersburg. But their jailors were evasive and would only tell them that it was "somewhere far away."

So they were made to walk to a desolate mine-shaft. Into this they were all thrown one after another and left there to die from their injuries and exposure. Weeks afterwards a party of Admiral Koltchak's White Army found their mangled bodies, some of them roughly bandaged with strips of linen torn from underclothing, showing that they had lived for some time after their fall.

Elizabeth went to her death singing a hymn, like the others. At the last moment she asked only to be allowed to cover her head with her cape so that she could not see the pit as she was thrown into it.

The Emperor Nicholas II of Russia had an extraordinary physical resemblance to his cousin, King George V of England, and it seems a strange irony of fate that while one made one of the best and most-loved rulers in the history of his country, the other died at the hands of his own subjects.

Anyone who knew him in those far-off days before the War would never have imagined Nicholas II as cast for a tragic role. Although he had great dignity on occasion, he was merry, good-humoured and essentially lovable. He liked simple food and simple amusements, was secretly bored by elaborate ceremonies and rather lonely in the midst of all the grandeur surrounding him. He was far more at home in an officers' mess than at a Court ball. His religious feeling was deeply ingrained; autocracy for him was not only a name; he saw himself as the Lord's Anointed. During the Coronation ceremony a Russian Emperor takes the Communion as a priest does instead of having it administered to him, in token of his divine mission as autocrat and head of the Church.

It was his tragedy that he was married to Alexandra Feodorovna, for, although she was a good and in many ways a fine woman, the combination of their two characters was literally disastrous politically. From the very start of the marriage her will dominated his. She was a beautiful woman, but her face had the look of one destined to sorrow; her eyes, even when she smiled, were inexpressibly sad. She was always considerate and kind to those around her, but she was impersonal with everyone except her husband and children, at the same time being the best friend to the people she thought she could trust.

She and Nicholas frankly worshipped one another. Even after many years of marriage they were like young lovers. They had fallen in love the day they first met at her brother's little Court at Darmstadt and from that moment no one else existed for either of them, although their path was not easy. Nicholas's parents were opposed to the marriage for reasons of youth, and it was only after some years that the Emperor was persuaded to give his consent.

Even then the fates were unkind to them. The wedding celebrations were clouded by the death of Alexander III, and the bride made her first entry into St. Petersburg behind her father-in-law's coffin.

The shy young girl called upon suddenly to fill the role of Empress found herself faced with overwhelming difficulties. The unfamiliarity of a country whose language she could not even speak and of whose customs she was ignorant, her own lack of experience, all these things counted against her.

She was unpopular and she knew it; as the years passed she grew so morbidly conscious of the antagonism around her that she withdrew herself more and more from the Court. She was too shy and too sensitive to try to create a favourable impression, her only instinct was to isolate herself still more. She could not have

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followed a more disastrous policy. Her appearance at public functions grew fewer each year; in the end the Emperor was accompanied on official occasions almost entirely by his mother and daughters.

The Dowager Empress had her own separate Court and, as the circle around her daughter-in-law thinned out, her influence increased correspondingly. Actually she was the one person who could have saved the situation, but she could not bring herself to do it. Although she never acknowledged it, she was bitterly jealous of her son's wife and, half-unconsciously perhaps, fostered the feeling against her. She did not realise the harm she was doing. It seemed so personal an issue this, the old story of an adoring mother unable to reconcile herself to taking the second place in her son's life, but the fate of an Empire hung on it. Not that she would have believed it even if she had been told; for she had a tragic aptitude for ignoring facts and believing only what she wanted to believe.

Years afterwards, when Wrangel's army had been finally defeated and she was forced to leave Russia and spent the last years of her life at her old home in Denmark, she used to wring the hearts of those around her by refusing to accept the story of the death of her son Nicholas and his family, even in the face of all evidence. She died in the firm conviction that he was safe and well, merely awaiting his opportunity to reascend the Throne.

Neither did the Czarina, Alexandra Feodorovna, realise that there were big issues at stake, for she was absorbed in her husband and children.

Her mother had died when she was a child and she had been brought up mainly by Queen Victoria. The widowed Queen, with her heart buried in the grave of the Prince Consort, had turned naturally to the consolation of religion, and the sensitive child, already inclined to introspection, absorbed the emotional atmosphere.

On her marriage she embraced the Greek Orthodox

religion and practised it with characteristic sincerity. But she had not her grandmother's well-balanced mind and, as the years passed, she grew more and more mystical, swayed by superstition.

She adored her husband and for his sake longed more than anything to give an heir to the Empire. When one after another four daughters were born to them her disappointment gave place to a profound melancholy. It had its outlet in fanaticism. Every reputed " Holy Man " and so-called " Miracle Worker " in the country was brought to her. They grew rich on her credulity.

At last her son Alexis was born and nothing could have exceeded her happiness. She saw in this beautiful child the answer to all her prayers, her vindication both as an Empress and as a wife.

But almost immediately it became evident that he was suffering from the dreadful disease of hæmophelia and all her joy and pride in him was turned to anguish. Life became a torture to her ; she never knew even an hour's peace of mind, for at any moment some trivial cut or bruise which a normal child would scarcely notice might bring on one of the terrible attacks of hæmorrhage she dreaded.

All the great doctors in Europe were called to the Palace, prescribed this treatment and that. Each was tried, but without success. One after another they gave up the case as hopeless.

Then Rasputin appeared out of the blue . . . or more accurately out of the obscurity of a Siberian village, where he had once been a horse-dealer and more latterly the exponent of a strange gospel of his own.

Within a few weeks of his arrival the " Staretz," as everyone called him, had not only managed to interest several bishops and other religious authorities in his teaching, but had collected a large following, mainly of women.

Among them were two Grand Duchesses and Anna

Viroubova, the Empress's friend. She came to Tsarskoe Selo full of the praises of "The Holy Man." . . . "He can even heal the sick. He has had miraculous cures," she insisted.

From that moment the Empress had only one thought. This was the man who would save her son!

She sent for him. He came to the Palace, a tall shambling peasant with unkempt hair, a straggling beard and dirty hands. There was nothing remarkable about his appearance except his eyes, which were extraordinary . . . deep set, piercing, magnetic.

By some strange coincidence the little Czarevitch grew visibly better after his first visit. The Empress, overjoyed, insisted that the "Staretz" should not leave him.

As the months passed the child grew steadily stronger, for whatever Rasputin's faults, he undoubtedly possessed the power of healing.

He was high in favour at Court now, his own apartment was crowded all day long with the hysterical women who followed him and hung upon his words. He was no longer dirty and unkempt; his clothes were of the finest; the Empress embroidered his silken shirts with her own hands. Gifts of money and jewels were showered upon him, but he had no use for them except to pass them on to the poor who crowded round his door.

He was neither greedy nor ambitious, only an ignorant peasant with a genuine belief in himself and his own spiritual powers. He had no real taste for Court intrigue, but enough vanity to exploit his influence with the Empress. So he began to meddle with affairs of State, even to make nominations for government posts. It was so easy for him; he had only to mention this or that candidate to the Empress and it was all settled, and there would be gratitude for him, presents, an increased sense of power. If he had imagination he must have seen himself as the pivot on which an Empire turned, for the

Emperor was dominated by the Empress, and she in turn was dominated by Rasputin. Whenever his hold on her seemed to be waning he had only to threaten to leave the Court and abandon the little Czarevitch to his fate to throw her into a panic. The strangest fact in all this strange story was that during his absence the child invariably got worse and was only restored to health when he returned.

So it went on; soon the whole Court was seething with resentment against the shadowy influence behind the Throne, this ignorant peasant from Siberia who had more power than any Minister.

He was a sinister figure, clinging tenaciously to the obscurity from which he had come, accessible only to his own followers, to the Empress and her friend, Anna Viroubova, and a few others in their circle.

The Dowager Empress indignantly refused to receive him, yet torn by curiosity to see the man of whom all Russia was talking, went to an art exhibition at which his portrait . . . the only one in existence . . . was being shown. To her surprise, when she arrived there she found a blank space on the wall where it had hung. It had been removed, she was told, by order of the Czarina!

So things went on until that fateful winter of 1916 and slowly the net was closing around them all, around the Emperor, the Empress and Rasputin. The gossip, whispered at first, grew wilder and wilder until the whole Court rang with it. The Staretz became a legend; there was no end to his supposed deeds and misdeeds. Even reverses at the Front were attributed to the fact that he was said to be a secret agent in the pay of Germany; his power over the Czarina was explained by the basest of reasons. She was too simple, too essentially pure-minded even to understand the stories that were being circulated, but they served, none the less, to bring down an Empire.

The last phase of the Empress's tragedy began on that

cold December night when Prince Youssoupoff and others invited Rasputin to supper and, after the poisoned cakes they gave him failed to take effect, shot him dead. It ended in a cellar at Ekaterinburg eighteen months later.

One of the few occasions when I ever saw the Czarina really happy was when she went back with her husband to her old home in Darmstadt for the marriage of my brother Andrew to Princess Alice, daughter of Prince Louis of Battenberg (who later took the title of Marquis of Milford Haven). She was like a girl released from school then, her face lost its look of sadness. She and Queen Alexandra were the two most beautiful women at the wedding, the Empress in misty delphinium blue and the Queen of England in a dress of amethyst sequins and wearing an amethyst necklace and tiara.

There was, of course, a tremendous family reunion for the marriage and the festivities lasted through several days of dinners, balls and gala performances at the opera.

That was in 1903. The other day I came across a photograph of some of the guests and realised that nearly half of the group died by violence not very much later.

The Emperor, the Empress, their children, the Grand Duchess Elizabeth and several Russian Grand Dukes were put to death during the Revolution. My father was assassinated, some of the English guests and one or two of the German princes were killed in the Great War.

Perhaps it was as well for us that we could not read the future, for I think it would have cast a shadow over the rejoicings.

Andrew and Alice had two wedding ceremonies, the first in the Protestant Church and the second in the Russian Church with Greek Orthodox rites. During the service the Russian priest asks the bride two questions . . . whether she consents of her own free

will to marry her husband and whether she has already promised her hand to any one else.

As my sister-in-law is slightly deaf she was carefully rehearsed the day before, but, even so, at the last moment she was so nervous that she confused the questions and made the responses in the wrong order, to the horror of the officiating priests and the intense amusement of the guests.

My mother's sister, the Duchess Vera of Wurtemberg, was at the wedding and, as usual, my brothers and I teased her unmercifully. Her appearance was irresistibly funny in our eyes, for she was small and dumpty, with a fat, round, spectacled face and, in the days when the shingle was unknown, she wore her hair cut short. Her hats and even her tiaras were always secured to her head by bands of elastic.

At the family dinner after the wedding my brother George sat next to her and, at a pause in the proceedings, snatched off her tiara and put it on his own head. Everybody laughed, Aunt Vera included, though she vowed vengeance on the culprit.

Her turn came, as she thought, a little later, when the bride and bridegroom started on the honeymoon. We were all gathered at the door throwing rice after them, when someone knocked off poor Aunt Vera's glasses, which were smashed to atoms on the stone steps. She turned round quickly and, guessing, although she was unable to see clearly without her spectacles, that George was to blame again, dealt a mighty box on the ear of the person standing immediately behind her.

Unfortunately, it was not George, for he had taken care to slip out of range, but the British Admiral, Mark Kerr, who was the recipient of it!

Another wedding I remember very well was that of my brother Nicholas to the Grand Duchess Helen, daughter of the Grand Duke Vladimir, in Tsarskoe, in August, 1902.

The bride wore the old Russian Court dress of cloth of silver, over which was a cloak of crimson velvet twenty yards long with a wide border of ermine and having a cape of the same fur hanging from the shoulders. The weight of this costume was so great that it was almost impossible for her to move in it and, when she knelt at the altar, she was literally anchored to the floor and had to be lifted to her feet by the groomsmen.

She wore a magnificent set of diamonds bequeathed by Catherine the Great to all the brides of the Imperial Family, a superb necklace falling in a shining cascade over her shoulders, enormous drop ear-rings, a bracelet of three rows of diamonds, a clasp which fastened her cloak and the Bride's Crown.

Twenty-five years later the wedding was brought very vividly back to my mind.

I was sitting in the New York office of Pierre Cartier, the famous jeweller, when he said suddenly: "I have something here I want to show you." He took out a velvet-covered case from his private safe, laid it on the table and opened it. . . . Inside was a crown composed of a circle of enormous diamonds, from which sprang six claws supporting a diamond cross. . . . "Do you recognise it?" he asked. I nodded without speaking; a tide of memories of other days swept over me. It was the Romanoff wedding crown. My mother had worn it and her mother before her; all the daughters of the Imperial Family had been married in it. The room seemed suddenly full of the ghosts of long-dead brides.

"I found it in Paris, quite by accident," M. Cartier told me. "I was passing an antique shop when I saw it in the window. I guessed at once what it was and went in and bought it. The antiquarian could only tell me that it had been sold by the Bolsheviks. He did not know how it had been brought out of Russia." M. Cartier added that he had already had several opportunities of



THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL FAMILY

(Back row, left to right) Grand Duchesses Marie, Tatiana and Olga.
(Seated) Empress Alexandra, Emperor Nicholas II, Grand Duchess Anastasia.
(On floor) Grand Duke Alexis.

selling some of the stones singly, but had refused to do so. " I am keeping the Crown intact until the restoration of the Imperial House," he said, " and then I shall present it myself to the Emperor."

But alas, that was ten years ago and the Crown is still reposing in his safe !

My mother had some beautiful jewels. Her rubies were famous, for my father had delighted in collecting them for her, saying that of all stones they suited her white skin best. She had some perfect emeralds, too, one was a *cabochon* the size of a plover's egg.

When I was about eighteen I once borrowed this stone to wear when I was taking part in a Mazurka at a house in Athens. We were all to be dressed in the old Polish costumes in keeping with the dance, and jewels were an essential. The emerald was delivered over to me with many injunctions to " take care of it," and I wore it as a brooch in my cap.

The Mazurka was over without mishap, and I was standing talking to some people when my sister-in-law, Princess Nicholas, came up to me. " What a lovely emerald that is that you have in your cap ; may I look at it ? " She had just taken it into her hand when, to my horror, the stone dropped out of its setting.

Now emeralds, unlike diamonds, are the most fragile of precious stones and can be smashed like glass. We all stood literally petrified with horror as we watched it roll along the carpet to the very edge of the marble floor beyond it. Then, to my indescribable relief, it stopped and lay there undamaged.

My mother's jewels seemed fated to undergo adventures in my hands. Many years later she and I were staying in Paris when she was obliged to return to Greece sooner than she had expected. I was to join her there a week later, stopping in Rome on the way. At the last moment she remembered that her famous emerald parure was at Cartier's in Paris being reset, and begged

me to take charge of it as soon as it was ready and bring it to her in Athens.

"I am going to give it to Tino for his silver wedding . . . so whatever you do, don't lose it" . . . she besought me. . . . "It is not even insured."

Before I left Paris M. Cartier delivered the jewels over to me, and I put them into my small valise, which I decided not to let out of my hands on the journey. I was not altogether at peace at the thought of travelling alone with jewels to the value of hundreds of thousands of pounds, and more than relieved to arrive in Rome without adventure. The first thing I did when I walked into the Grand Hotel was to deposit the precious package in the safe in the manager's office.

I was to continue my journey to Athens next day, travelling by boat from Brindisi.

The next morning I had lunch at the hotel with the ex-Premier of Greece and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, both of whom happened to be in Rome. The three of us sat talking after lunch until I suddenly realised that I had only twenty minutes left to catch my train. I dashed upstairs and, with the help of my valet, hurled my things into two suitcases, collected my heavy luggage and drove at top speed to the station. I arrived on the platform with just a few seconds to spare. The special detective whom the Italian Government very courteously appoint to guard us on all railway journeys was already standing at the door of my reserved compartment, a very efficient-looking little man who bore the strangely incongruous name of Briganti!

I was settling myself comfortably into my seat while the train steamed slowly out of the station when I made the dreadful discovery that I had forgotten my mother's jewels!

They were perfectly safe, of course, in the custody of the hotel, but knowing how disappointed she would be,

I felt that I could not arrive in Athens without them and confess my carelessness.

I was racking my brains for a way out of the difficulty when I thought of my friend the special detective. I summoned him into the carriage and told him what had happened. As I had guessed, he was a person of resource. He immediately suggested that when we arrived in Brindisi he should go back to Rome, collect the jewels and bring them on to me in Athens.

This seemed a good plan, and we carried it out. I watched his departure with a sinking heart. He was my one hope!

Of course, my mother's first question was: "Where is my emerald parure?" I regret to say that I lacked the courage to make a truthful reply and only mumbled something about it not being ready and being sent on by a special messenger. Fortunately she was contented with that.

But I was more than thankful to see my little Italian detective make his appearance at the Palace, forty-eight hours later, smiling and efficient as ever, carrying a white package which he placed in my hands. The sum I had to part with for railway fares, to say nothing of the gold watch with which I presented him as a souvenir of the occasion, made me regret my lapse of memory!

CHAPTER IV

MORE RUSSIA—CHASED BY MADMAN—CRIMEA

MY visits to Russia were not all pomp and circumstance, for palaces after all are only homes on a more elaborate scale, and behind a stately façade is all the simplicity of family life. My Russian relations were so numerous that I spent months going round from one house to another, staying a few days with each in turn, and I was always obliged to return to Greece before I had got even half-way through the list.

After spending a few weeks with my grandmother I would generally go to stay with the Empress Marie at Gatchina, an enormous house bristling with towers and battlements, about fifty miles south of St. Petersburg. It had been built by Prince Orloff, the favourite of Catherine the Great, after the spacious fashion of that time, and most of the *salons* were big enough to accommodate a regiment and so lofty that it was almost impossible to make them homelike, except on what Americans call the mezzanine floor, where the architects had gone right to the other extreme and designed the ceilings so low that any one tall could touch them. But the Empress Marie preferred the comfort of these rooms to the gloomy splendour of the other apartments, and she and her family and nearly all the guests who stayed at Gatchina lived on that floor. Olga, the youngest of the children, was the only exception, for her English nurse, Mrs. Franklin, had sternly refused to bring up "her baby" in such airless surroundings, and so a vast *salon* whose tapestried walls depicted various Biblical

scenes—which Mrs. Franklin remarked practically would be useful for instruction later—was turned into a nursery.

Michael and Olga were not only my favourite cousins, but my best friends and the three of us used to have great times together, running wild in the gardens of the Palace, riding on the miniature electric railway, which was our special joy.

This was a wonderful affair, made by a famous firm of railway contractors, who had presented it to the Emperor's children. Its coaches and trucks were exact copies of the real ones, its engines attained a speed of four or five miles an hour; its lines were equipped with stations, tunnels and railway bridges calculated to delight the heart of any child.

The nursery was ruled with a rod of iron by Mrs. Franklin, an impressive figure, as massive and erect as a guardsman and with a deep throaty voice that terrified me, although she was actually the soul of kindness. The entire household had a wholesome awe of her.

Once I remember hearing an irate old general of a choleric disposition and a surprising command of language, roundly abusing a sentry on the terrace of the Palace. The angry torrent was in full swing, when suddenly a window up above opened and Mrs. Franklin's head popped out: "General, quieter, quieter, please..." she called reprovingly. The general looked up and faltered in the middle of a sentence. Without another word he turned on his heel and retreated from the scene.

The life of the younger generation at Gatchina was more formal than ours at Athens. All the professors who came to give lessons and other visitors arrived impeccably attired in tails and wearing decorations. I shall never forget seeing the American dentist working busily at Olga's mouth with his tail coat carefully pinned back, his sleeves tucked over his wrists, and an imposing row of orders glistening on his breast.

Our great delight at Gatchina was to go for picnics

on the long northern summer evenings when there was no nightfall, only a soft grey twilight creeping across the sky. In the quaint old Russian carriages, some of them with the seats set back to back like Irish jaunting-cars, others in the form of two horseshoes linked together, we would drive to our destination in a long procession with the cook and his satellites bringing up the rear.

When we arrived there would be preparations for dinner with all the younger members of the party insisting on helping with the cooking, while the elders explored the neighbourhood.

At one of these picnics the Empress Marie went to visit a convent in which she was interested, and my sister Minnie and I accompanied her. All the sisterhood came out to receive her and after a solemn *Te Deum* had been sung, there was tea in the Mother Superior's *salon*. Prince Youssoupoff, senior, who was camping in the vicinity with his regiment, the Chevalier Gardes, had been invited to this and suggested to the Empress that, as she was the regiment's Honorary Colonel, she might like to take the salute at a march past afterwards.

The gates of the convent opened on to a broad road with a ditch at either side, spanned by a wide footbridge. On one of these bridges the Empress took up her position while all the nuns from the convent, with the priests and acolytes bearing the cross and holy eikons, grouped themselves behind her.

My sister Minnie and I went over to the bridge on the opposite side of the road with our cameras ready to take a snapshot of the scene, and there we were joined by the Court photographer.

Presently we heard the strains of martial music and the Chevalier Gardes appeared headed by Prince Youssoupoff. They made a splendid picture with their superb black horses, glittering uniforms and waving pennants as they rode slowly past the Empress. We were just going to take our photos when suddenly there

was an ominous crack, followed by a chorus of shrill screams as the crowded footbridge opposite us collapsed and nuns and priests disappeared into the ditch! Only the Empress, who had been standing in front of the others at the extreme edge, managed to save herself; every one else was sprawling in hopeless confusion while the regiment with military impassivity rode straight on. Fortunately the ditch was comparatively shallow and the ground soft, so no one was hurt.

In the summer the Court used to go to the Baltic coast where all the Grand Dukes had palaces and the Emperor went into residence at Peterhof, a beautiful estate stretching for miles down to the sea and enclosing a huge palace which was used only for official functions, a home farm and a number of cottages, one of which was occupied by the Emperor and his family and another by the Dowager Empress. The park of Peterhof was famous for its fountains. Many of them were the works of noted sculptors, depicting scenes from mythology, others were merely giant pillars of water. Immediately below the Palace was a group surrounding an immense basin surmounted by the figure of Samson killing a lion, out of whose mouth was thrown a jet of water that towered above the Palace. Below that was a long canal bordered by pine trees and fountains alternating. In the grey light of the summer evenings the effect was fantastically lovely, and the park was a favourite rendezvous for the fashionable world who drove there after dinner to wander about the cool lawns and listen to the music of the Imperial band.

On other evenings there would be gala performances on the lakes, with the Imperial ballet from St. Petersburg dancing on a floating stage, while the whole Court gathered there to watch them, the women in exquisite dresses, the men in their picturesque uniforms.

It seems almost incredible in looking back on those days when Russia was the richest nation in Europe and

the Imperial Court led the whole world in culture and elegance, that none of those brilliant, carefree men and women who composed the old regime realised the impending tragedy until it was too late. Had they done so, one wonders whether it could not have been averted. Those fountains of Peterhof played as once the fountains of Versailles had played, to delight the flower of a nation ; the artists of the Imperial ballet were applauded by a Court as once Molière and Mozart had been applauded by another Court. But there was no one there to draw the parallel and perhaps it was as well. Some day the world will learn that happiness and beauty must be the prerogative of the many, not of the few, but until it does civilisation will go on making the same mistakes, paying the same penalties through the ages.

I generally divided my time on the Baltic coast between staying with the Empress Marie at Peterhof, with my sister Minnie at her father-in-law's palace, Michailowskoe, and with my mother's brother, the Grand Duke Dimitri at Strelna. The summer passed in a round of gaiety and pleasure . . . passed all too soon, for those were the last years of peace and security so many of us were to know.

When the Revolution broke out my sister's husband, the Grand Duke George and his brother Nicholas, with the Grand Dukes Paul and Dimitri, were among the first to be arrested by the Bolsheviks in St. Petersburg, where they were imprisoned for seven months, living in terrible conditions and on famine fare.

One morning their gaolers came into the cell and ordered them to pack their belongings. "You're in luck," they told them, "you are going to receive your discharge papers this morning."

They collected their few possessions, distributed most of them as souvenirs to their guards and stepped joyfully out into the sunshine. A lorry waited at the prison

gate and to their surprise they were told to get into it. "You are to be taken to the Soviet Commission for your papers, instead of receiving them here. It is a mere formality."

So unsuspectingly they drove through the streets, making plans for the first time in months. But instead of their freedom they were given a sentence of death, made to dig their own graves and lined up outside the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, and shot!

Far away, in the tranquillity of Harrogate in Yorkshire, where she had set up hospitals, my sister waited in vain for news of her husband. She and her two daughters had been in England when the War broke out and they were unable to return overland through Germany. Although she had wanted to take the sea route, the Grand Duke George would not hear of their running the gauntlet of the submarines and the mine-sown coast: "You are much better off in England and the War won't last for ever," he wrote. But Revolution swept over Russia and after a while his letters stopped. She waited, hoping still in spite of reason. He had been dead many weeks before she learnt the truth.

Another delightful place to stay at was the Grand Duke Vladimir's big villa at Tsarskoe. The Grand Duchess was one of the most charming and certainly the most brilliant of the women in the Imperial Family, and one met there artists, musicians and any interesting foreigners who happened to be visiting Russia. Her second son, the Grand Duke Boris, had a house of his own in the English style and I used to sneak off there and play poker whenever I could.

Boris was devoted to animals and had an unusual pet, a huge tame pig known as Auguste, who was the pet of the household. Auguste was lacking only in beauty;

he had everything else, intelligence, personality and sweetness of disposition. He used to trot round after his master like a dog, beg for titbits from the table and go through a whole repertoire of tricks.

One of my most interesting experiences in Russia was my visit to Tiflis in 1901, when my mother and I went to the centenary celebrations of the Russian annexation of the Caucasus. We took a boat through the Black Sea to Batoum and went on to Borjom, where we stayed with the Grand Duke Michael, who had a villa there, built just above the river in the heart of that wild and mountainous country. We spent several days riding in the hills, fishing in streams so thick with trout that it was almost too easy to catch them and shooting in forests that abounded in ibex, bear and wolf.

Mr. Stucker became a devotee of the local sport, negotiating the rapids on rafts constructed from logs roped together and guided by a man at each end armed with long poles. The natives of the district were experts at it, though even so it was dangerous enough for the logs were swept along at a terrific rate by the rushing current, missing great rocks and overhanging trees by a few inches.

We arrived at Tiflis after a two-days' journey from Borjom and stayed with the Viceroy, Prince Galitzine. The town was crowded with people who had come from all parts of the Caucasus for the celebrations. Every day there were reviews, official lunches and dinners.

One of the chief events of the week was a gala performance at the opera, which was attended by deputations from every Caucasian tribe. The difference in types was extraordinary. For centuries the Caucasus was the dumping-ground of nearly every race; political exiles, adventurers, soldiers of fortune from all parts of Europe found their way there, married and settled down with their families. The years passed and the land absorbed them, yet their descendants clung to the customs and

traditions instilled into them, even to the language of their ancestors.

To this day you will find deep in the Caucasus Scottish villages whose precise origin is unknown. The inhabitants wear kilts, dance the reels, play an instrument closely resembling bagpipes and have still the melodies of the old Scottish songs, although the words which they sing to them are incomprehensible to anyone but themselves.

There are German tribes where a strange mongrel German is spoken, and Italian and Greek tribes that have also retained most of the characteristics of their mother race. I talked to a sentry from one of these Greek colonies and, although the language he spoke was very different from the ordinary Greek, I could recognise it.

The tribe I found the most interesting was the Hefsour, descended from Crusaders who had remained in the Caucasus on their way back to the Holy Land. They were tall, splendid-looking men, wearing still the mediæval armour their ancestors had brought back from Palestine, helmets dinted in the battles of centuries, coats of mail adorned with the faded outline of a cross. Their weapons were the lance and the short sword of the Crusading knights.

The picturesque figures of all these different tribal delegations filled the little opera house, so that the audience was infinitely more colourful and interesting than anything on the stage. The guests were all on their best behaviour and sat gravely watching the performance and applauding politely at the end of the acts.

But the moment the Viceroy and our party left they reverted to the primitive and pandemonium broke out. In their anxiety to collect souvenirs of the occasion to take home to their families they tore up everything within reach. Curtains were stripped from the boxes and cut up into pieces, possibly to furnish wives and

sweethearts with blouses, chair coverings were torn off, even gilt ornaments on the woodwork were chipped away. The timid little manager of the theatre and his staff were far too afraid to oppose the wild warriors from the mountains and it was some time before calm was restored, but by then the theatre was a wreck.

On the last evening of our stay in Tiflis there was an open-air entertainment at which all the ladies wore the national costume, consisting of short jacket, wide-pleated skirts and tiny pill-box hat. The effect was charming, especially in their traditional dance, where they glide through the different figures scarcely moving their feet, the skirts swinging rhythmically to the music.

On another of my visits to Russia my mother suggested that I should go to Kieff and visit the famous cathedrals and monasteries there.

In those days the many miraculous shrines and holy relics of the centuries-old city brought pilgrims from all parts of Russia. We went from one church to another, each of which contained some priceless treasure: Madonnas whose robes blazed with jewels, exquisite frescoes and eikons painted by the old Byzantine masters. In one shrine was the body of St. Anne, laid in a coffin of pure gold; in another was a fragment of the Cross in an exquisitely carved casket, studded with emeralds and rubies.

In the monastery we were taken down to the catacombs that stretch for miles under the river. It was a gruesome experience going down into the dimly lighted passages with their faint odour of damp and decay and coming every few moments on the mummified corpse of some saint or former prior, lying in an open coffin dressed still in the robes of his Order. My first impression was singularly unpleasant, for I had been given no idea of what I was to see.

The entrance to these catacombs is a long tunnel paved with copper that slopes straight down into the

bowels of the earth. It is extremely slippery, a fact of which the sedate officials and monastic dignitaries who were showing me round forgot to tell me, with the result that I lost my balance at the top, slid down the whole length in a sitting position and arrived in a small cell. In the faint light of a little lamp that was burning there I saw the figures of three mummified saints. So horrified was I at intruding on this macabre party that I remained without moving until the others joined me!

On the way back I stopped at Odessa. The usual telegram had been dispatched, notifying the authorities of my arrival, but there was some mistake and my elder brother George's name was given instead of mine. So an impressive official reception was prepared, red carpets were laid down and a number of civic and military dignitaries, headed by a band and guard of honour, waited on the platform for Prince George of Greece. They looked dumbfounded when out of the train stepped a small boy and his tutor.

I was, of course, delighted with my reception and the sophisticated nature of the entertainment planned for my brother. It began with a luncheon at the house of the Governor-General, Baron Kaulbars, a giant of a man with a big voice and a jolly laugh. His carriage, drawn by magnificent Russian trotters, was waiting outside his house and he invited me to get into it and drive with him, to the dismay of poor Stucker who knew that the Baron was a favourite target for Nihilists and that several attempts had already been made on his life. However, we drove off in splendid style, the old coachman with his padded coat perched on the box, the Baron and I seated behind.

We were at the top of a long, steep hill with a sharp bend at the foot, when something must have startled the horses, for they bolted without warning. The Baron grabbed hold of me with one of his big hands, forcing me back into my seat. "Don't move, don't move," he

bellowed. Then he leant over the box and got hold of the reins which the coachman was already clinging on to like grim death and the two men pulled and strained with all their strength, sawing desperately at the horses' mouths until at length they came to a standstill only a few feet from the curve.

It all happened so quickly that I had scarcely time to be frightened, but Mr. Stucker, who had seen the start of the runaway from the carriage in which he was following us, went through some bad moments!

For some reason or other, journeys to and from Odessa have often given me strange adventures.

I shall never forget calling there once on my way back from the Crimea and getting caught in the worst storm I have ever experienced. Throughout the night we rolled and pitched helplessly, expecting to go to the bottom at any moment. When at length there was a welcome lull and we managed to put into Odessa harbour, I was just settling down for an hour's sleep when I was awakened by a violent dispute between our captain and the owner of the shipping line, who was loudly bewailing the perils to which his ship had been exposed. "You know very well her back is broken and she might go to the bottom any moment; you had no business to take her out in such weather," he asserted with such conviction that I felt thankful that I had lived to hear the conversation!

Later in the morning I changed over to a ship bound for Constantinople and continued my journey. But my adventures were not over!

I was lunching at the Captain's table in the public saloon when I felt someone's eyes on me. I looked up and encountered the fixed and glassy stare of a man at the end of the table. On meeting my eyes he gazed still harder, but I turned away and affected to take no notice. Then suddenly he sprang from his seat and crossing the saloon he knelt down before the eikon on

the wall and began to pray fervently. Then he rose from his knees and came straight over to me, sank down at my feet and, seizing my hand, began to cover it with kisses.

"Don't take any notice, the poor fellow is mad," the Captain whispered to me, though the information seemed superfluous. "Go back to your place now and finish your lunch," he said sternly, addressing his strange passenger. The man went meekly back to his seat, but made no attempt to eat, only continued to stare at me. I stood it as long as I could, but the pathos of that wild gaze unnerved me and I went to my cabin.

I had not been in it for more than a few seconds when there was a knock at the door. Fortunately for me, instead of telling the visitor to enter, I went over to the door and opened it myself. There stood the poor madman, who had evidently followed me. On seeing him I tried to close the door but it was impossible, for he flung himself against it and pushed with all his strength. However, I managed to stick my foot in it which gave me an advantage. At the same time I pressed the bell which was just inside the cabin and to my unutterable relief heard footsteps coming in answer. A moment later the steward appeared, a tall hefty man, who immediately flung himself on my unwelcome visitor. He was bowled over like a child, for the madman had the strength of the insane and it took five sailors to overpower him and get him to his cabin. I did not venture out again until the doctor had assured me that he was sleeping calmly after the injection of morphia he had given him.

The next morning the Captain invited me to go up to the bridge. We were just putting into Constantinople, and the Bosphorus was a lovely sight with dozens of little Turkish *caiques* skimming over the blue waters on all sides of us, though it demanded considerable skill in navigation to avoid colliding with them. Suddenly I

felt again that uncomfortable sensation of being watched. I glanced down and there on the deck below was my friend of the staring eyes! He had managed to get out of his cabin and creep up the companion-way unnoticed. With one bound he was on the bridge and the chase began.

The space was limited, but pursuer and pursued covered it at top speed, doubling on our tracks again and again. Round and round the bridge, in and out of the control-box we went, while the Captain dare not take his eyes from the navigation of the ship for one moment and could only shout for help. Finally, when I was almost exhausted, three or four sailors came to the rescue and the poor man was bound and taken ashore to the asylum.

I enquired after him later and was told that he had died within forty-eight hours of leaving the ship. It transpired that he was a Greek who had been in an asylum in Odessa suffering from religious and patriotic mania, and that he had been discharged as cured. Unfortunately the chance meeting with me, a member of his country's Royal House, had reawakened his insanity.

I usually spent part of the year staying with my sister Marie at her villa near Yalta.

The Crimea is incredibly beautiful with its dark, pine-topped mountains sloping down to the sapphire sea. The fringe of gaily stuccoed villas set in gardens blazing with flowers looked as fantastic as a toy town.

The Livadia Palace, the favourite residence of the Emperor Nicholas II, which was just outside Yalta, was a big villa built in Italian style on the site of the older one, which had originally belonged to a Greek emigrant, to whom it had been given by Catherine the Great, and who named it after his birthplace.

Next to Livadia was my grandfather's house,

Oreanda, a big grey stone villa with a wide courtyard enclosed by marble pillars. When later it was burnt to the ground, these pillars were the only things left standing, and my sister Marie had them put in her garden. The effect was exactly like a Greek temple, harmonious enough in the Crimea, for there were still many traces there of the most prolific race of the ancient world, and the remains of a Greek colony had actually been unearthed next to the site of her villa.

I cannot even picture the Crimea in the new Russia of to-day. It was so essentially a place of leisure, given over to the old regime. I wonder sometimes how many of those smiling gardens and their toy villas are still standing, or whether the relentless tide of time has swept them away altogether, with all they represented.

Within their walls were staged some of the most tragic scenes of the Revolution, when the Crimea was in the hands of first one party then another; swept by conflicting hates, hardened to the horrors of civil war and the worse horror of reprisals.

At my sister's villa, Harax, the Dowager Empress Marie spent her last unhappy weeks in the land that had been her home for more than half a century, before leaving for exile on a British warship.

When the Revolution broke out she was at Kieff and from there managed to go to the General Headquarters of the Army at Moghileff, where she found the Emperor in total ignorance of affairs in St. Petersburg, isolated from his family and surrounded by the advisers who had just tricked him into the most disastrous mistake of his life—the signing of the deed of abdication.

The mother and son spent one day together. What passed between them no one knows, for neither ever referred to it afterwards. The Empress, true to the habit of a lifetime, never lost her self-control, bade farewell to her son as calmly as though she had been going on a short journey. She never saw him again.

In the first confusion of the Revolution the attention of all parties was concentrated on St. Petersburg, where the Provisional Government was taking over the reins, and at the Front, where Kerensky was doing his best to put order into the wavering troops. The Empress Mother, who had taken refuge in the Crimea at the villa of her daughter Xenia, was overlooked until the end of April in 1917, when a detachment of soldiers arrived without warning and put her and her household under arrest.

She was stunned with surprise. With her usual faculty for dismissing unpleasant realities from her mind, she had until then refused to believe in the existence of the Revolution and treated all rumours as false. That the soldiers should actually dare to invade her presence, ransack her things and confiscate her cherished prayer-books and eikons was incredible. When they took no notice of her indignant protests and laughed at her anger, she retired into her own room to shed the helpless tears of old age.

While the Provisional Government was in power she could still keep the illusion of freedom, for she was allowed to drive from one villa to another, to receive visitors and to live a more or less normal life. But the Provisional Government fell in October and the whole country was delivered into the hands of the Bolsheviks.

The Empress Mother, her daughter the Grand Duchess Xenia and her husband, their children and other members of the Imperial Family were all imprisoned in a high-walled villa that had belonged to the Grand Duke Peter. There they were put under the closest guard night and day and no one from the outside world was permitted to enter, with the exception of the children's tutor, who continued to give them lessons as usual. All the money they had with them at the time of their arrest had been confiscated and they were not permitted to draw any more, so that as time passed they were without means to buy even the necessities of life.



THE TWO ELDEST DAUGHTERS OF THE TSAR, NICHOLAS II

Grand Duchess Tatiana as colonel-in-chief of her Lancer regiment (*left*), and the Grand Duchess Olga (*right*), as colonel-in-chief of her Hussar regiment.

Then the tutor courageously volunteered to go to St. Petersburg: tell the Danish Minister, Scavenius, their plight and obtain money from him for the use of the Empress. For the satisfaction of the guard he invented some story of visiting his relatives and unsuspectingly they allowed him a permit to take the train for St. Petersburg.

On his arrival he went straight to the Danish Legation where, after a little delay, Mr. Scavenius procured the sum of 120,000 roubles (about four thousand pounds) which he handed him in bank-notes. With these stuffed into his pockets the tutor returned to the house where he was staying in St. Petersburg.

But the Bolsheviks had been sufficiently interested in his movements to spy upon him and he had not been in his room for more than a hour when there was a knock at his door and he was told that a commissioner and a party of soldiers had come to take him to headquarters. To gain time he replied that he had been asleep and would come down as soon as he was dressed.

In the few minutes left to him he took out the bundles of notes and looked around the room in desperation for a hiding-place. The best he could find was under the oil-cloth in front of the wash-stand and, tearing this up hastily, glued the notes to the inner side and then replaced it, before going downstairs.

As he expected, he was put under arrest and after a lengthy examination in which he revealed nothing, he was imprisoned. However, as it was impossible to prove anything against him, he was released after a detention of several days.

He went straight back to the house where he had been arrested and there to his horror found that his room had been ransacked. The oilcloth had been torn up and lay in an untidy heap in one corner. He took it up and shook it mechanically, though without the least hope of finding anything. To his amazement his

fingers touched crisp paper and, on turning it over, he found the bundles of notes still intact and firmly glued to the surface. The Bolsheviks had examined the flooring carefully and even taken up boards in their search, but they had not thought of turning the oilcloth itself!

The next question was how to get the money to the Crimea and, after much thought, he decided upon a plan so daring that its very simplicity helped him to carry it through.

He bought a new book, a long treatise on philosophy, suited to the lighter hours of a tutor and, after cutting most of its pages, he glued the bank-notes into the rest. He and his fellow passengers were searched several times on the train, but the guards gave only a passing glance at the book he held out blandly for their inspection, and he was able to get back to Yalta and deliver over the money to the Dowager Empress without further adventure.

As the months passed conditions grew worse in the Crimea, and the sufferings of the Empress Marie and her household increased. The commander of the Red sailors who had been set to guard them apparently could not do enough to show his brutality; deprived them of first one small privilege, then another; subjected them to every humiliation. Even the sailors under him pitied them.

One day one of them, a boy of eighteen, came to the Empress's room and fell on his knees in front of her chair. ". . . My term of service here is finished and I have to go back to St. Petersburg," he said. "I have come to ask your blessing before I go."

For the next few minutes she scolded him, exactly as she would have scolded one of her own grandchildren, telling him that he ought to be ashamed of the part he was playing in the Revolution. "What would your own mother say to you?" she asked him sternly. "And I expect you have forgotten everything she taught you.

Where is your holy image?" He admitted that it was in his pocket, as he had not the courage to wear it round his neck. "Then give it to me at once," said the Empress, "and I shall put it on again for you." He left her in tears promising to make amends. Some time afterwards she had a letter from him saying that he had gone back to his father's farm.

But the majority of the guards were not like him, for the Reign of Terror was at its height and the dregs of humanity had learned to profit by the sincere convictions of others. The Crimea was filled with hordes who gave way to every form of vice, robbed and pillaged to right and left and spent the proceeds of stolen property on drugs. It became almost impossible to get cocaine or morphia for the wounded, for every chemist's shop in Yalta was invaded by armed sailors who forced the proprietor, with a revolver held to his head, to deliver over his entire stock of drugs. Alcohol of every sort was looted for drink and even iodine and other disinfectants which could be distilled suffered the same fate.

The only possible plea that can be made for the frightful atrocities committed in the Crimea in those days was that most of their perpetrators were under the influence of drugs the whole time. The wave of vice that swept over the whole country was perhaps the most terrible aspect of the Revolution, for, carried away by it, men and women alike revived the tortures of the Middle Ages.

One of the worst of these human fiends was a beautiful girl of nineteen, who disposed of her victims by the simple process of making them sit on the edge of a barrel, into which their brains were knocked out. She too was always drugged, and eventually died from an overdose of cocaine.

Out of the horrors of it all shone individual deeds of courage and self-sacrifice.

In Kislavodsk the children of two families, friends of

mine, were arrested by the Bolsheviks and lined up with their mothers in front of a firing-party. Their ages ranged from seven to eighteen, yet they stood waiting for death without a murmur, except the youngest boy, who began to cry heartrendingly just before the command to fire.

Unexpectedly the line of soldiers wavered and hesitated. Suddenly their commander threw down his arms. "I can't stand this," he shouted, and ran from the scene, while his men sheepishly broke rank.

The children were saved, for it was days before another commander was sent to take charge and by that time they had escaped. The man who had given them their reprieve was shot for disobeying orders.

The Dowager Empress only just escaped death at the hands of the Bolsheviks in 1918 when the Reds were driven out of the Crimea by the advancing Germans. The commissioner at Yalta decided that before evacuating the district it would be preferable to dispose of the members of the Imperial Family, who were his prisoners, and sent over a detachment of his men with orders to the commander of the guards at the villa to deliver them over for execution.

The prisoners heard the heavy lorries draw up outside the doors and a moment later the hall was full of soldiers, who told them roughly to get their things together in readiness for "a journey." All of them, except the old Empress, guessed what that meant, but resistance was useless and they were preparing to obey as calmly as they could when the commander of their guards, whose insults and brutality had added to the misery of their imprisonment, unexpectedly checked the proceedings by demanding the list of names of the prisoners who were to be delivered over. For twenty minutes they waited in suspense while he scanned them carefully, deliberating over first one and then the other, insisting on consulting elaborate documents in each case. By the time that he

had obtained exemption for the Grand Duchess Xenia's youngest son, on the grounds that as he was only ten years old "he had plenty of time to grow up a good citizen," and for the doctor, whose services were "necessary for the Guard," another ten minutes had passed and the soldiers in charge of the lorries were growing impatient.

All the formalities were apparently over when the commander asked suddenly: "You have your papers authorising the transfer?" He was told they were all in order, but insisted on seeing them.

"What! These are signed in Yalta!" he exclaimed. "I shall certainly not deliver over my prisoners to you. I take my orders from Petrograd and nowhere else."

Thereupon began an angry debate, the Reds from Yalta maintaining that they had been sent to fetch the prisoners and would not return without them, while the commander of the guard, backed by his sailors, steadfastly refused to take orders from any one except his commissioners in Petrograd. Eventually, when it seemed as though a pitched battle was going to break out between them, the soldiers departed, vowing vengeance on the guards and promising to come back next day.

But before the next morning the commander of the guards had received a telegram instructing him on no account to deliver over the prisoners and making him responsible for their safety. A few hours later the Germans were in possession of Yalta and the Red Guard was disbanded. Its commander came to bid farewell to the Empress Marie and then for the first time the prisoners learnt the truth.

Their apparently brutal gaoler had held his post simply to protect them when the need arose. He had deliberately delayed the soldiers from Yalta and quarrelled with them, knowing that the German force was within twenty miles of the town, and that if he could gain time his prisoners would be safe. So he had gone up to the

lighthouse and sent himself the false telegram from Petrograd, at the risk of his own life, if the ruse was discovered.

"But you were the last person we thought our friend," said the Empress. "Why you insulted us almost every day." He laughed: "I had to play my part, otherwise I should have lost the confidence of my men and have been transferred where I could not have helped you."

Had it not been for his intervention one more tragedy would have been added to the toll of the Russian Revolution. But unfortunately his trick was discovered and he paid for his loyalty with his life.

Two years dragged by. The Crimea was occupied successively by the Germans and by the White Army. Still the Empress Marie refused to leave Russia. "It will all be over in a few weeks," she would always say when any one tried to persuade her. She lived, like all the rest, on raw turnips, linseed oil and occasionally pea-soup, but she never complained.

The King of England sent warships for her several times; her sister, Queen Alexandra, wrote again and again, urging her to join her, but without result, even though the White Army was being pushed back and the Reds were within a few miles of Yalta! One after another the women and children were taken to safety on board the British cruisers, but the Empress remained until the British Admiral pointed out to her that her presence in the town was actually a handicap to the White Army, as it meant setting aside troops who could ill be spared to guard her.

After that she reluctantly consented to go, but she was furious with her daughters and her entire entourage for "making such a fuss about nothing." She sat in the midst of the packing and preparations abusing them all roundly, unable even then to admit that there could exist so unpleasant a thing as a revolution!

CHAPTER V

ENGLAND—CALF-LOVE—ENCOUNTER WITH MY FIRST WIFE

I WAS twenty-one when I paid my first visit to England to stay with King Edward and Queen Alexandra.

It was the summer of 1909 and the Edwardian era was at its peak; an era of ease and security, of untroubled affluence based on a contented country and a firmly poised monarchy. An era of lavish entertaining with the great London homes that are only memories to-day . . . Devonshire House, Lansdowne House, Grosvenor House . . . thrown open night after night for splendid dinners and balls. An era of lovely women and brilliant men.

No woman can be more beautiful than an Englishwoman when she is beautiful, and the Court of Edward VII scintillated with beauties: the Cornwallis-West sisters, the Duchess of Westminster, Princess Daisy of Pless, the Duchess of Portland, Lady de Grey, Millicent Duchess of Sutherland and Mrs. Keppel. Queen Alexandra outshone them all, lovely even into old age with her wealth of fair hair, gay deep eyes and slender figure.

Life at Buckingham Palace was a compound of the magnificence of the Russian Court and the informality of Athens. King Edward took me and my nephew (now King George of Greece) who was there at the same time as I, everywhere with him and, when he could not keep pace with our youthful energies, deputed Sir Harry

Stonor to escort us. I believe the poor man had to take a rest cure after we left, for he had literally no sleep for three weeks; every night there were theatres, balls and supper parties which we insisted on going to.

King Edward had occupied a prominent place in my childish affections ever since those far-away summers in Denmark. Seeing him anew among his own people I could so well understand why he was universally beloved, for he had that extraordinary personal charm that is given to few men. Future historians will do justice to his qualities as a ruler, to his unerring instinct for diplomacy, his brilliant grasp of foreign affairs, but only those who knew him intimately could appreciate his kindness and understanding, the tact that earned him the name of the Peacemaker, not only as a ruler, but in his own family. It was always he who poured oil on the troubled waters; his diplomacy came not only from a far-seeing brain, but from real goodness of heart. Even his failings were endearing; they only made him more human, more tolerant of other people.

He would give way sometimes to unreasonable gusts of temper. Once I remember when he was at a dinner which was to be followed by a ball, he spilt some spinach on the immaculate white expanse of his shirt front. At once his temper flashed out and, plunging his hands into the dish of spinach, he smeared it all over himself. Then, seeing the various expressions of polite consternation stamped on the faces of the guests, he laughed in his infectious way: "Well, I had to change, anyway, hadn't I? I might as well make a complete mess of it."

Queen Alexandra had a positive genius for collecting trifles of every description and hoarding them long after their origin had been forgotten. Books, photos, china, letters, old programmes, odds and ends of ribbons and laces, were heaped together indiscriminately anywhere and everywhere, for she never could throw any of them

away. Beautiful miniatures and Georgian snuff-boxes occupied a table with Earl's Court china pigs and bog-wood charms from Ireland; she kept the fishing-fly given her by her gillie in Scotland as carefully as she kept a brooch from one of the Indian Maharajahs. Rows of photographs completely covered the top of the grand piano, starting at the extreme end and stretching right down to the music-stool, so that it was impossible to put it to its original use. She asked me to play to her one evening and seemed almost relieved when I refused, for, as she agreed with me: "It would take quite an hour for us to put everything back in its right place."

She even contrived to take most of her precious treasures with her on a journey. The royal yacht, the *Victoria and Albert*, was full of them. I remember once when we were caught in a storm off the coast of Norway, she sat up nearly all night picking up and replacing bric-à-brac on her tables. No sooner would she get everything in order on one side than the yacht would give a lurch in the opposite direction and she would have to begin all over again on the other side.

The Marquis de Soveral, former Minister from Portugal to Great Britain, and an intimate friend of King Edward, was on board the yacht for that cruise and at dinner on that stormy night Queen Alexandra sat between us. Suddenly there was a terrific roll to starboard and she and the Marquis and a crystal pail of ice landed in a heap in the corner.

Although on State occasions no one could look a more dignified figure than Queen Alexandra, she was full of fun.

Once when I was staying at Buckingham Palace she sent for me to go to her room. On the bed was laid out a miscellaneous collection of mantles, dresses and bonnets of every description that had belonged to Queen Victoria. Queen Alexandra was examining them, her eyes dancing

with merriment. "Now, Christo," she said, when I came in, "you've got to put this dress on and go down to Aunt Minnie's room and make her laugh."

Aunt Minnie (the Dowager Empress of Russia), who was staying at Buckingham Palace, was in bed with an attack of lumbago.

We chose the dress Queen Victoria had worn in the days of her youth to open the Great Exhibition in Paris under Napoleon III, an alarming creation in tartan taffetas. I struggled into it, perched a befeathered bonnet on my head and added a lace parasol to my costume. Thus attired I was led by the Queen through endless corridors past scandalised servants until we reached the Empress's room, where I was solemnly announced as "Her Majesty Queen Victoria."

Unfortunately the invalid laughed so much that she had a relapse!

I am afraid that none of us of the younger generation showed enough sympathy to the poor Empress, who was really a martyr to her very painful complaint. Once while she was staying at Sandringham House she was so ill that for weeks she was unable to walk and was taken around the gardens in a bath-chair.

I met her one morning, being slowly wheeled along in the direction of York House, and offered to take over the chair for a while. The nurse who was accompanying her unsuspectingly relinquished it.

Before long we came to the top of a steep slope and I regret to record that the temptation proved too much for me. With one well-directed push I sent the chair careering down it at headlong speed. The Empress's despairing shrieks rent the air as she sped down to the very bottom and then, driven on by her own impetus, was rushed half-way up the corresponding incline, only to start the descent again, this time backwards. When I rescued her she was terrified out of her wits, but she had quite lost her lumbago. Either the fright or her

violent movements she had made to free herself had cured her.

I had a strange experience while I was staying at Sandringham some months after the death of King Edward. I had come over to London for the funeral, which was one of the most impressive ceremonies I have ever witnessed. Eight ruling Sovereigns followed the coffin. The procession, which was several miles long, was led by the Kaiser, and after him rode the kings, headed by my father who had reigned the longest.

Apart from the sad solemnity of the occasion, for he had been greatly attached to the late King, the journey from Westminster Abbey to the railway station, where the mourners took the train for Windsor, was a miserable one for him. The horse assigned to him to ride in the procession was either too fresh or had contracted a cramp, for it turned in circles and rose on its hind legs the whole way. The *cortège* took an hour and a half winding through the streets, and by that time my father, although an excellent rider, was sick and dizzy. The Turkish representative's horse also began whirling round soon after the start of the procession, whereupon that somewhat timid horseman promptly dismounted and walked the rest of the way.

After the funeral I remained some weeks in London and then went down to Sandringham to stay with Queen Alexandra. I arrived on a hot July afternoon and, as I felt tired, went upstairs to rest after tea.

My bedroom was in one of the modern wings under the clock-tower, a bright room with cream-coloured walls and furnished in gay blue and white chintzes. In the alcove made by the clock was a dressing-table with a square mirror. My bed ran along the opposite wall. At first sight one would have imagined it impossible to associate anything of the supernatural with so cheerful a setting. I put on my dressing-gown, lay down on the bed with a book and read until I dropped off to sleep.

I did not wake again until my valet came to lay out the clothes I was to wear for dinner. I talked to him for a few minutes then took up my book and began to read again.

Suddenly the feeling that I was being watched made me turn round. Framed in the dressing-table mirror was the head of a woman. She stood so still that I was able to take in every detail of her appearance in a detached sort of way. I saw that she was young and very beautiful, that she had curling brown hair and a soft dimpled chin rising out of a square *décolletée* and that the upper part of her face was covered with a little black mask. Through it her eyes gazed straight into mine with a depth of sad entreaty. She looked so completely real, so much a creature of flesh and blood like myself that my first thought was that she had somehow entered the room and that I was only looking at her reflection in the mirror, and I turned round to reassure myself.

There was no one there except my valet who was bustling back and forth carrying towels and dressing-gown into the bathroom, and, to my amazement, he walked right over to the mirror to fetch something from the dressing-table and passed within a few inches of that silent figure without any sign of having seen her.

It was like some ghastly nightmare; the pleasant room still full of the July sunshine, the homely, everyday sounds of bath-water running, of drawers being opened and shut, the valet with his unconcerned rubicund face, and yet that strange presence, those haunting eyes fixed on me in some unfathomable grief.

I felt literally rooted to the bed. I tried again and again to call out, but my throat seemed paralysed. The valet took no notice, only went on with what he was doing, while seconds that seemed like hours passed.

Then, as suddenly as she had come, the woman vanished and the spell was broken. I turned indignantly on my man: "Didn't you hear me speaking to you? Why didn't you answer me?"

He looked round in blank astonishment. "I am sorry, Your Royal Highness, I did not know you were speaking."

"Did you hear nothing?" I asked, trying to speak casually, though my heart was thumping unpleasantly.

"No, Your Royal Highness."

I dressed for dinner and went downstairs where I joined my sister Marie and Princess Victoria. While we waited for the others I told them my experience. They were frankly unimpressed. Marie laughed at me after the manner of sisters and Princess Victoria said firmly that I was overtired and ought to take a tonic. And there the subject was dropped.

I slept soundly that night and in the light of morning I began to persuade myself that the whole thing must have been a dream.

After lunch, Queen Alexandra suggested that we should motor over to Houghton, Lord Cholmondeley's beautiful place, as she wanted us to see it. When we arrived we found the Cholmondeleys were away, but the butler offered to show us round.

I was in the little chapel, absorbed in some exquisite carving, when my sister and Princess Victoria came hurrying out of the picture gallery. They were pale with excitement as they seized hold of me and dragged me into the gallery where they stopped in front of a picture. "Look! Do you recognise her?"

I stood staring at the portrait of the woman I had seen in my room at Sandringham the day before. She wore the identical dress in which she had appeared to me. In one hand she held the little mask in which I had seen her so that this time the enchanting face was fully revealed. The artist had caught something of the sad appeal in the eyes.

Princess Victoria turned to the housekeeper who was accompanying us round the gallery: "Do you know

who that is?" she asked. The woman hesitated: "Well, yes. But we never speak of her here."

After a little hesitation she told us that the lady was the family ghost and that her portrait had always hung in one of the big guest rooms which had been so haunted that no one could ever sleep there, until the father of the present Marquess had had it removed to the picture gallery. After that her visitations had ceased. . . .

"I believe no one has seen her for about seventy years," the housekeeper concluded.

So that was the origin of my ghost! But still I could not understand why she should have left her own surroundings to appear to me, who had never even heard of her, at Sandringham, a distance of several miles.

Weeks afterwards I heard the explanation, or at least one explanation, from my mother's lady-in-waiting who was interested enough to make enquiries.

She discovered that the lady had been in her lifetime the wife of an ancestor of the Cholmondeleys, who had treated her very badly. Having no legal redress in those days, her one hope had been to intercede with the King, and for a long time she had tried in vain to escape from her miserable home and go to London. But her husband had seen to it that she had no chance of getting her liberty and towards the last years of her life literally kept her under lock and key. In the end she died of a broken heart, her one object still unattained.

Since then, the story goes, she appears from time to time to any one in the vicinity who happens to be connected with the King, pleading with her sad eyes for them to intercede on her behalf.

England was the setting for my first romance which had, alas, a tragic finale. At least I saw it as tragic then, from the viewpoint of twenty-two; looking back on it now I can appreciate the humour of the situation.

There was, in the English Royal Family, an unmarried princess who was said, in the popular Edwardian phrase, to have been "disappointed in love." So she became the typical maiden aunt, and as time passed acquired the attributes of so many maiden aunts, whether princesses or otherwise. She adored young people, engagements and weddings, gossip of any sort and, most of all, meddling in other people's lives.

I had not been in England very long before she decided that a wife must be found for me. Her choice fell upon Princess Alix, the daughter of the Duke of Fife. By subtle insinuations she convinced me that an engagement between us would meet with everyone's approval.

I was immensely flattered for I had admired Princess Alix ever since I came to London, but I should never have dared to propose to her at that early stage, still less to approach her father on the subject. However, the maiden aunt, now completely in her own element, promised to "arrange everything for us."

A few days later she came to me triumphantly with an invitation for me to stay at Mar Lodge with the Duke of Fife and his family that August. Unfortunately she did not tell me that it had been wrung reluctantly from the Duke after her solemn assurance that I had given my word of honour not to propose to his daughter. Instead, she led me to believe that there was a clear field in front of me.

So in blissful ignorance I went up to Scotland and a few days later Princess Alix and I got engaged on the sly.

After about four days it occurred to us that it would be as well to tell her parents. This had never even suggested itself in the light of an ordeal to me, for my father, despite his severity to us in our childhood, had accustomed us to complete liberty of action as we grew older. But poor little Princess Alix, brought up in the strictest of Victorian traditions, was very much in awe of her parents, and it took her utmost reserves of courage

to go in fear and trembling, pale as a sheet, looking like a frightened child, to the Duke of Fife's study one evening before dinner and tell him of our engagement.

She came in to dinner later with red eyes and answered my smile with a gesture of despair. Her father sat like a thunder-cloud at the head of the table.

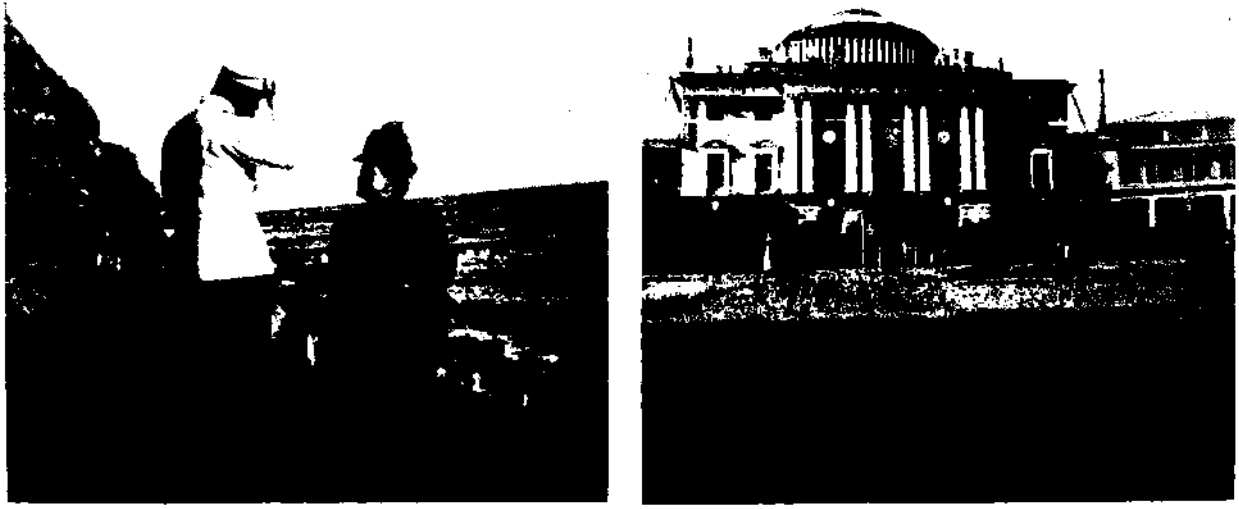
When we left the dining-room I was summoned to the study and there ensued one of the most painful interviews of my life. Not only did the Duke dispel any illusions I might have had as to the possibility of marrying his daughter, but he refused to accept my explanation of what had happened and told me frankly that he considered I had behaved like a cad in breaking my word. So angry was he that it was impossible to make him understand that I had never given my word and that the poor old princess's romantic tendencies alone were to blame for the absurd situation.

There was a long and painful scene, which I am afraid was not confined to the two of us. Princess Alix shed tears, the Duchess of Fife shed tears, the elderly princess shed rivers of tears and became so tremulous and involved in her explanations that she was worse than useless as an ally. Queen Alexandra ran around from one to the other, unable to hear accurately anything that was being said, but anxious to pacify us all.

Some time after midnight we all departed to bed and I left the house very early the next morning before any one was awake.

I went straight over to Balmoral and walked into the house occupied by Lord Knollys at about seven o'clock. His daughter Louvima (who owes her unusual name to the fact that the three princesses, LOUise, VIctoria and MAude, were her godmothers) descended to receive me, listened in sympathy to my tale of woe and fetched her father out of bed to cope with the situation.

Lord Knollys went straight to the Castle and told the whole story to King George, who immediately asked me



TWO PICTURES FROM PRINCE CHRISTOPHER'S SNAPSHOT COLLECTION

(Left) The Tsar, Nicholas II, talking to Queen Olga by the sea at the Crimea in 1900.
(Right) Pavlovsk Palace, near St. Petersburg (as it was then), where Prince Christopher was born.

to stay there. He and the Queen welcomed me with a warmth that went some way to salving the outraged dignity of youth.

They went into gales of laughter over my description of the scene that had taken place at Mar Lodge, although the King insisted that the matter could not be left like that. "The only thing to do is to write a letter to the Mac Duff, say you are sorry and patch things up," he said.

So the letter was written and a few hours later I received a very charming answer to it and an invitation to lunch at Mar Lodge. Princess Alix and I met at the luncheon-table, I very sheepish, she very constrained, but we were not left alone together for even one moment.

The Duke of Fife died during the following winter. I still regret the fact that I never really had an opportunity of explaining things to him, and that to the end of the chapter he should have thought me a cad!

I did not see Princess Alix again for many years and in the meantime she married Prince Arthur of Connaught. Fortunately the scars were not very deep with either of us, for we had been more in love with love than with one another. At all events, when we met at the wedding of Prince George and my niece Marina, we were convulsed with laughter at the recollection of our unfortunate romance.

I was in London again in the year of the Coronation of George V and took part in the Great Tournament at Earl's Court, one of the most gigantic flops ever organised in the cause of charity.

The idea, the representation of a tournament in the days of the Crusades, was charming from an artistic point of view, but the whole thing was so badly managed from start to finish that only the fact that Lady Randolph Churchill was the organiser saved it from complete

disaster; for Lady Randolph, who as Jenny Jerome had been the first of the American heiresses to conquer English society, was one of the deities of pre-war London, and those who did not love her feared her.

As a production every detail was perfect. Weeks of study were given to it. Famous writers and historians supervised the rehearsals; the costumes were designed by Royal Academicians regardless of cost. The loveliest women in London took part in the different scenes. Mary Curzon (now Lady Howe) was the Queen of Beauty and made her entrance seated in an authentic litter and attended by a bevy of beautiful maids of honour led by Lady Diana Manners. Princess Daisy of Pless was a visiting Queen and rode into the lists on a palfrey, equally authentic. There were knights, esquires, pages and men-at-arms by the hundred; a whole troop of Horse Guards was pressed into service as Crusaders. Suits of chain-armour were borrowed from museums and private collections all over the country; the jousting was so realistic that an English peer, after being unhorsed, lay on his back half-stunned and nearly suffocated by the weight of his armour, looking like an overturned turtle in his struggles until ambulance men, oblivious of the fact that they were striking a discordant modern note, rushed into the field and rescued him. Prince Youssoupoff and the Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz were two of the Crusading princes, attired in gorgeous costumes; my nephew, the present King of Greece, and I made our appearance as Byzantine knights, in cloaks of red and white brocade, sewn with gold, that cost a small fortune. Mine has since been converted into a set of cushion covers; King George presented his to the Royal Theatre of Athens. In this dazzling array I had to drive through the London streets in broad daylight, crawling slowly through the traffic, to the manifest delight of the passers-by, who hailed me joyously as "Sir Galahad," and invented other equally apt witticisms at my expense.

I love a London crowd; it has good temper, sanity and a particular blend of humour that you find nowhere else. There is nothing in the world more friendly, provided you can take a joke at your own expense.

I had an experience of this while I was in London for the wedding of Prince George and my niece Marina, when I drove from Buckingham Palace to St. James's Palace to see the presents.

My wife was tired and unable to accompany me, so I had an imposing royal car all to myself. In this I progressed, inch by inch, one of a long line of carriages filled with guests, along the Mall. Crowds lined the route, commenting with embarrassing frankness upon each car and its occupants, and my solitary state was a topic of general enquiry.

I was getting quite used to hearing: "Here's one all by himself. What swank!" when a wit in the front row of spectators varied it with: "Here's Charlie Chaplin himself." I protruded my domed head and horn-rimmed spectacles from the window . . . "Not at all," I said, "you're quite wrong this time. As a matter of fact it's Harold Lloyd." . . . A roar of laughter went up!

But to return to the Tournament at Earl's Court. It was a living illustration of the slogan: "It pays to advertise." Everyone had so concentrated on the artistic side of the production that they had completely overlooked the fact that an audience was as necessary as performers. In the important business of deciding whether armour should or should not be gold inlaid and the colour of jerkins worn by the men-at-arms, such mundane details as selling tickets and notifying the Press had been left to chance.

The result was that, apart from the actors themselves, there was an audience of about a dozen people, looking in the vastness of Earl's Court like a handful of peas in an enormous tureen.

The mailed knights thundered down upon one another,

the rival Queens of Beauty shone in splendour, the Crusaders fell upon one another with conscientious thoroughness . . . to row on row of empty seats.

The tragic aspect did not manifest itself until the day of reckoning, when it was discovered that the cost of the production amounted to thousands of pounds, against which was set something like twelve guineas from the sale of tickets. There ensued an agitated discussion as to who was to make up the deficit. The charitable organisation in whose name the Tournament had been given obviously could not, neither could the committee.

Things had come to a deadlock when an American woman who was then in London, hearing of the disaster, generously came to the rescue and gave Lady Randolph Churchill a cheque for the whole amount. Her name was Mrs. W. B. Leeds.

That was the first time I heard the name of the woman who afterwards became my wife.

CHAPTER VI

KING MANUEL OF PORTUGAL—STAGE FRIENDS—TWO GREAT MEN

IT was in England that I made one of the best friendships of my life—with King Manuel of Portugal.

We met for the first time in Harrogate, where my sister Marie and I were taking the cure, and we used to forgather in the Pump Room every morning before breakfast. Although sulphur water imbibed in enormous quantities is not exactly a convivial beverage, we got quite a lot of amusement out of the process.

King Manuel had been deposed two years before, but his changed fortunes had not affected his sense of humour. His gaiety was infectious; he had a schoolboy's love of fun. I remember the first time he came to spend an evening with us at my sister's villa in Harrogate.

He arrived after dinner accompanied by his equerry, a venerable-looking Portuguese gentleman, with a short white moustache. The visit began in a most formal way with all of us making polite conversation, but before it ended we were under the table squirting siphons of soda-water at each other. The poor old Portuguese gentleman, who was the least adroit at the game, got wet through.

One of the chief factors that contributed to the abdication of King Manuel was the Gaby Deslys myth which was deliberately concocted by his enemies and circulated throughout Portugal. Actually his friendship with the fascinating little French dancer, who was at that time the rage in London and Paris, was of the

slightest, but the most exaggerated stories were invented. It was rumoured that the King was completely under the dominion of Mlle Gaby Deslys, that every one of his actions was dictated by her and that she herself was a secret agent in the employ of a foreign power which was working for the ruin of Portugal. Another story was that the King intended to marry her . . . one version even claimed that he had already done so secretly . . . and that he had given her not only the crown jewels, but also vast sums out of the revenue of Portugal.

These stories, fantastic and completely untrue as they were, were believed in Portugal. Mlle Deslys was chased out of Lisbon by an infuriated mob which actually threatened her life, and would quite probably have carried out its threats had she not saved herself by jumping on to a provincial train which was just starting.

Who was at the back of this systematic propaganda was never positively established, but it was a definite campaign, cleverly conducted. Gradually the flame of discontent, which had never been extinguished since the previous reign, was fanned until it spread over the whole country.

In actual fact King Manuel loved only one woman in his life, his wife, Princess Victoria of Hohenzollern, and their marriage was a very happy one.

In the latter years of his life the King and Queen stayed several times with my wife and me at our villa in Rome. He had grown prematurely old and saddened; the fact that he had never regained his throne had been a bitter disappointment to him. He loved the atmosphere of the Eternal City, for he was deeply religious. To our villa, while he was with us, came a constant procession of cardinals and other dignitaries of the Vatican, and, when he was not receiving them, he was generally attending service at some church. He was a brilliant musician and one of the best amateur pianists I have ever heard.

As a sovereign he failed tragically; as a friend few people can ever have inspired more affection than he. His death was a real sorrow to all those who knew him personally.

. . . . . .

But to return to those last pre-war seasons in London. I stayed for some weeks with a delightful old Greek lady, Madame Scaramanga, who had a house near Hyde Park Corner, where she entertained lavishly. At her receptions I met many members of the Greek colony in London, among them a handsome girl named Miss Skilitzi. She was young then, but thoughtful and intelligent beyond her years, vividly interested in many subjects and intensely patriotic, although she had lived nearly all her life in England.

Our friendship continued for a number of years and then, unfortunately, I offended her. The cause of the misunderstanding was completely trivial, but I think it had some influence on both our destinies and probably on those of other people.

What actually happened was that Miss Skilitzi, who, anyway, was very wealthy, gave a ball at Claridge's, where I was then staying. I, knowing nothing of this, dined with friends that evening and returned to my hotel early. Going past the ball-room, I happened to look in over one of the curtains hanging on the glass doors. I saw Miss Skilitzi look at me with a face of thunder and wondered what I had done to offend her. The next day I heard about it. She had invited me to the ball and I had ignored the invitation. I protested that I had never received it, but she obviously did not believe me. A few days later I was looking through some letters in a blotter when I found an unopened envelope. Inside it was the missing invitation to Miss Skilitzi's ball.

She never forgave me, and we never met again from that day to this. Some little time afterwards she married M. Venizelos.

Since then I have often wondered whether certain events might not have had a very different ending had it not been for that apparently trivial incident in London. But nobody has ever told the world that there was a time when she wanted to marry my brother George.

Some of the most amusing parties in pre-war London were given by Mrs. Hwfa Williams, whose husband instituted Sandown race meeting, made roller-skating the rage and was always the pioneer of any new diversion.

Mrs. Hwfa Williams had the secret of mixing harmoniously guests of every type. She was the only hostess in London who could put a dancer next to a duchess and a bishop beside a popular jockey at her receptions and get away with it. Her week-end parties at her country house, Coombe Springs, were delightful. One would meet at them people with as widely diverse interests as Prince Youssoupoff; Feo, Lady Alington; Ernest Thesiger; Lord Lonsdale; Claude Grahame-White, the noted airman, and his wife, and probably Pavlova or some other artist. Very often there would be a scientist or two to supply the intellectual note.

Grahame-White and his wife, a charming American who afterwards married Count Frasso and came to Rome, had a house on Strawberry Hill and entertained there in an informal and delightful way. They lived in an artistic *milieu*, and I met many well-known actors at their Sunday evening parties. One of these was George Grossmith, who was then drawing crowds to the Gaiety Theatre, and who was as irresistibly amusing off the stage as on it. After the dinner he could always be persuaded to give the most perfect imitations of celebrities. Once I remember he gave so true an impersonation of another of the guests, a well-known actress, that she was bitterly offended and left the house in a rage.

Lily Elsie, who was then at the height of her career, was sometimes at these parties and brought with her for the first time a shy and beautiful girl who was later to

become famous as Gladys Cooper. Then there was nearly always Ethel Levy, one of the first American artists to take London by storm and who later married Grahame-White, after his divorce.

Of the musicians I met there I remember best Max Darewski, a brilliant pianist with an impish smile and the sad eyes that mark the Jewish race. He played divinely and might have been one of the foremost pianists of his day if he had not preferred to earn tremendous salaries on the music-halls.

With Grahame-White I made my first flight in an aeroplane. My mother being in Russia and seeing this in the papers, gave me an awful wigging. There was certainly some excuse for her fears, for flying was an adventurous business in those early days. The biplane in which we went up was a primitive affair with only one seat. Grahame-White, as the pilot, sat in this while I perched uncomfortably and most insecurely on the tank at the back. There were no safety straps, and every few minutes he turned round and called out apprehensively: "You all right still?" as though he half expected to have shed me in somebody's garden. After we had circled around Brooklands several times, at a height of about a hundred feet, he shouted: "I'm going to land now; hold tight!" The warning was necessary, for down we shot like a fast elevator out of control, bumped the ground so suddenly that I clutched him by the hair to prevent myself being jerked off the tank, and finally, after three or four bird-like hops, came to rest.

A few days later I flew with him again in his six-seater machine which was considered a world wonder in those pre-war days. It was called the "buss." This time his wife insisted on being taken up too, but she was so terrified she screamed steadily from the moment we took off until the moment we landed. Yet now she has become a devotee of flying and will never go by train anywhere if she can take an aeroplane.

Another house I loved to visit for its atmosphere of freedom and friendship was Sunning Hill, near Ascot, which belonged to that fine old sportsman, Thomas Baring. His wife had been a noted beauty of Irish extraction, whose sister was married to Baron de Stoeckl, my sister Marie's gentleman-in-waiting. To stay with them was to experience the traditional hospitality of England at its best. There was a pleasant informality in their entertaining in contrast to some of the houses to which I was invited. It was a meeting of old friends, and we all still think of it that way.

The balls given by the Whitelaw Reids, the American Ambassador and his wife, were among the most magnificent in London. The Embassy, which was then in Park Lane, had a beautiful ball-room, which made an ideal frame for the elaborate cotillions which were the rage at that time.

Lord and Lady Michelham also entertained on a magnificent scale at their house on Denmark Hill. The atmosphere there was always semi-political, for Lord Michelham was not only the financial prop of his party, but had a flair for picking out the rising young politicians. Conversation was generally brilliant at his table.

Lady Michelham's appearance was extraordinary. She was rather fat and was literally hung with jewels. I remember dining with her one evening when she appeared with a resplendent *pavé* of diamonds and rubies bound around her hair. I admired it, whereupon she wheezed in her guttural voice: "You may not believe it, but it once went round my waist." It seemed certainly almost incredible and I said so—to my neighbour's horror!

Lady (Arthur) Paget, called Minnie by her friends, often invited me for week-ends to her beautiful house at Coombe. Born Miss Stevens of New York, she was one of the popular Americans married into the English nobility, and, despite the fact that she was permanently

lame, no one was in such constant demand for parties. She gave in her daily life one of the finest examples of courage I have ever seen. Some years before I met her she had a frightful accident, falling from the third floor of her London house to the bottom of the lift shaft. Both her legs were literally shattered, but fortunately the butler, who was the first to reach her, had the presence of mind to press back the bones into position again, so that when she was taken to the hospital the surgeons were able to avoid amputating. But the nerves were so injured that she never knew an hour free from pain for the rest of her life. Notwithstanding this, she was always cheerful and a most amusing companion.

She was an intimate friend of Mrs. Leeds, whom I afterwards married, and was actually staying with her at the Ritz in Paris when she died. My wife told me that she showed her usual gay courage to the last, refused even to admit that she was ill and died sitting up in bed while she was having her nails manicured.

Lady de Trafford, Lady Cadogan and the Duchess of Rutland were other noted hostesses of those days. Mrs. Harry Greville had wonderful week-end parties at Polesden Lacey and Lady Cunard invited half London to her house to meet the stars of the Russian Ballet which she and Mr. Thomas Beecham had just brought over to England.

At one of Mrs. Hwfa Williams' parties I met Melba, who was then at the zenith of her career. Afterwards I grew to know her well. Anyone less the temperamental, exotic *prima donna* of fiction would have been difficult to imagine. She was warm-hearted, shrewd, jovial and very witty, in a rather Rabelasian way. She had a great many admirers; the Duc d'Orléans was one of the preferred ones. For many years he was her devoted slave, and gave her some of her most beautiful jewels. She was naïvely proud of her conquest and, years later, when we lunched with her in Paris and she met my second

wife—the niece of the Duc d'Orléans—for the first time, I said: "Hello, Auntie Nellie," to which she answered: "Isn't it pleasant to have all the family together?" . . . and then went into gales of laughter at her own joke.

I remember that at the age of four I was taken downstairs in my grandmother's house, very neat in a white piqué dress and blue bows, to hear Anton Rubenstein play. I stood behind and imitated him until Grandma sent me upstairs. But since then, although I have studied the piano, I have grown reconciled to the knowledge that I shall never be anything more than an ardent lover of music and quite a good accompanist, though a very mediocre pianist.

The first time I played for Melba was when she was singing at a private house where I was one of the guests and her accompanist had not arrived. She was extremely doubtful when I offered to step into the breach; in fact her obvious distrust of my capabilities was not complimentary, but she picked out a simple ballad, saying: "Perhaps you could manage that." From that we went on to Brahms and Schubert and, when her own accompanist finally arrived, she chose to continue with me. After that I have often played for her.

In that same year in London I accompanied another singer. She has achieved fame since then, but at that time she had only recently come to England and asked me to go with her to give her courage. When we arrived at our destination we found assembled various Olympians of the concert world—but no accompanist. On telephoning him she was told that he had just sprained his ankle. So I had to be the substitute again.

She came through the audition with flying colours and, afterwards, when everyone was clustering around her with congratulations, a little man detached himself from the group and came over to me: "How is it I haven't come across your accompanying before?" he asked. I told him that I was an amateur. "Well, then, you ought

to be a professional; that's all I can say," he replied. "Anyone with your talent for accompanying is wasted in any other job. Come round to see me and I can get you plenty of engagements." He gave me his card. It was Lionel Powell, the well-known impresario. He never found out who I was, for the singer did not give me away.

I met Caruso at Mrs. Van Raalte's house in Grosvenor Square. The famous tenor had just been through a terrible time. For several weeks he had completely lost his voice through overstrain and fatigue. Naturally, nothing of this was known to the public, but he had come over to London as a last resort to consult Professor Barthelmy, a Greek music professor, who was credited with performing miracles where vocal chords were concerned. After a few lessons he entirely restored Caruso's voice.

Mrs. Van Raalte insisted that I ought to take singing lessons and persuaded me to let Professor Barthelmy try out my voice. In vain I protested that, although he might restore damaged voices, he could hardly be expected to create one out of nothing. So there I was having this voice trial, when I heard the door open softly. Thinking it was Mrs. Van Raalte, I did not turn round, but went on warbling away until I finished the song. Then from behind me a rich, southern voice called out: "Bene, bene," and there, to my intense embarrassment, stood Caruso, an expansive smile on his round, jolly face. "Bene" . . . he repeated again, with the tolerant benevolence universally assumed by great artists when encouraging the feeble efforts of amateurs. As far as I am concerned, it has never been "Bene" again!

After that he sang song after song for us, and, before he left, presented me with one of his lightning caricatures of myself. He had a great talent in caricature and might have become as celebrated a cartoonist as he was a singer if he had chosen to give the time to it.

His was a personality that was at once forceful and charming. There have been few singers, I think, who so endeared themselves to all with whom they came in contact. He was almost worshipped in Naples, his native town, and there at least his memory is still as green as on the day he died. Each year the Mass which is said on the anniversary of his death is crowded with people of all types, many of them the humbler friends of his childhood, whom he never forgot. One man subscribed to buy a candle, three feet in circumference and reaching almost to the roof of the church, which is lighted on this one day each year.

While I was staying with King George and Queen Mary at Balmoral in the summer of 1912 I met two men who were destined a few years later to play a part in the events leading up to the abdication of King Constantine. One was Lloyd George, the other Lord Kitchener, and they both dined at Balmoral on the same evening.

It was the first time I had met either of them and I remember being struck with the contrast between them. The fiery little Welshman with his leonine head, his vivid gestures and his incessant flow of conversation, was a perfect foil for the tall, silent soldier. Four years later, when the fate of Greece hung in the balance, they both reacted characteristically to type. Lloyd George, like most of the Allied ministers, was an ardent supporter of Venizelos, while Kitchener's sympathies were for King Constantine, a soldier and an idealist like himself. When he visited Athens in 1915 the two men instinctively liked and trusted one another. "I spoke to him as one soldier to another," said the Field-Marshal after the interview. "He is in the right. When we want the Greeks we can have them on our side."

Had it not been for Kitchener's tragic death the story of King Constantine might have ended very differently

CHAPTER VII

TWO RISING STARS—FIRST REVOLUTION—BALKAN WARS—ENGAGEMENT

IN the year 1909 there were two rising stars in Greece, two men placed far apart by birth, education and circumstances, coming to the fore by deviating paths and having ostensibly widely different aims, yet their destinies were cast together. There was a strange resemblance between the two, a resemblance that extended even to the physical. One of these men was Venizelos and the other Basil Zaharoff.

They rode their way to power together, became sworn friends and later sworn enemies, waged war ruthlessly first for and then against each other. And when it was all over the stars that had risen side by side fell together, and two rather lonely old men who had outlived their fame died within a short time of one another.

Venizelos was of mixed parentage, Turkish, Jewish and Armenian. The story goes that when he was born, his tactful father summoned the representatives of all three religions, the Greek Orthodox priest, the Rabbi and the Imam from the Mosque, and had them waiting in different rooms. It would seem that in later life the son profited by the parental forethought.

He had the characteristics of all three races: the ruthlessness of the Turk, the Armenian's love of intrigue and the keen brain of the Jew. He was the son of a prosperous carpenter and owed much of his education to his own efforts.

Zaharoff's origin is shrouded in mystery. So much

has been written about him, so much evidence produced, none really conclusive, for he loved nothing better than to baffle the curious. All the information I ever knew him vouchsafe was that his ancestry was Russian and Greek. He certainly had the mysticism, the superstition and the artistic strain one so often finds in Russians.

It has been said of him that he began life as a page-boy in a café in Athens, but it is difficult to believe this of one so deeply cultured in almost every subject, with such a wide knowledge of not only modern languages, but the classics.

Venizelos first came into prominence as the thorn in the side of my brother George who was appointed High Commissioner in Crete in 1898. The post was no sinecure, for Crete was a hotbed of intrigue even before Venizelos appeared out of the blue, a shabby young man with a fox-like smile and an amazing gift of oratory and a still greater gift of putting other people in his pocket. He could talk so convincingly that even my father, though diametrically opposed to many of his theories, had to admit that, after listening to him for an hour, he generally found himself being reluctantly convinced. He was never forceful or compelling; he was smooth as silk, gentle, obsequious, with a mind as agile as a rapier and a never-failing flow of words. On brains less alert he had a hypnotic effect; he could sway crowds in whatever direction he wished and twist cabinets this way and that until they did not know their own minds. His campaign in Crete was so successful that my brother was driven out of the island.

That year 1909 was a stormy one for us. My father lived from day to day in the pleasant anticipation of being kicked out at any moment as his predecessor, King Otho, had been. The Officers' League and a faction of the Army and the Navy were definitely against the Government and quarrelling among themselves. My brothers and I were forced to resign our commissions.



A SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF PRINCESS VICTORIA, QUEEN ALEXANDRA AND HER SISTER, THE EMPRESS MARIE OF RUSSIA, TAKEN IN 1909

From Jatoi we watched the famous Battle of Salamis, when half the fleet fought against the other half, fortunately without much damage on either side.

Throughout that year the country was see-sawed violently as first one party and then another got supremacy. We never knew which way the pendulum was going to swing; we could only sit and wait with our trunks packed. A British cruiser was anchored for weeks at a time in the bay, ready to take us off if the need arose.

Fortunately for us it did not. Gradually things righted themselves. The Revolution—if revolution it could be called—petered out because no party knew what it wanted, and hence all came to the conclusion that it was better to put up with existing evils than to invite new ones. But it was a question of touch and go for us. Ruling any Balkan country demands strong nerves and a sense of humour.

In the general confusion no party wanted to form a cabinet, and my father, faithful to his policy of steering clear of party politics, would take no sides.

At this juncture Venizelos came to the fore. It was represented to the King that he was the one person in Greece capable of getting together a cabinet without causing a civil war in the process. So Venizelos came to the Palace for an audience.

He was so poor in those days that he wore cracked boots and frayed trousers. His smart frock-coat, he told us afterwards, had been borrowed for the occasion. But there was about him a certain unconscious dignity, the marks of a dominant personality. Underneath his silken urbanity one glimpsed an iron will and an absolute ruthlessness. He was the born political adventurer, piratical and opportunist. My father, of all men, had the least cause to like him, yet the fact remains that he not only liked, but trusted him. He was warned against him time after time, but it made no difference. Once a

statesman of proven loyalty to our house brought the King an intercepted letter in which Venizelos openly threatened him: "I have kicked out one George already, and I've come to Athens to kick out another," he wrote.

The next morning he came for an audience. Before he left my father told him casually that he wanted to show him something, and put the letter in his hand. For once his extraordinary aplomb deserted him. Every vestige of colour went out of his face. "What are you going to do?" he stammered. My father shook his head: "Nothing. Take that letter; I give it to you as proof of my faith, for in spite of it I trust you."

He trusted him to the bitter end.

My first memory of Basil Zaharoff goes back to my boyhood when he lunched with my parents at Tatoi. He was more or less at the beginning of his career then, a handsome man, looking younger than his forty-odd years, with eyes of vivid cornflower blue that met yours with a candour so child-like that you wondered what was behind them.

Afterwards I saw him many times, though I never succeeded in penetrating that enigmatic personality any more than the rest of the world. Like Venizelos, he had appeared in the political arena, apparently from nowhere. His fortune, even then, was a very considerable one. There were all sorts of conflicting rumours, some of them ugly enough, as to how he got it. He took no notice of them; he was always uncommunicative about himself. He never mellowed, as so many men will do, under the spell of wine and conversation; he talked brilliantly, but always on general topics. One gathered that he had travelled all over the world, met people of every type; the rest was shrouded in mystery.

He never posed as a patriot or claimed to have any

special affection for Greece, or any other country for that matter. He was a free lance, throwing in his interests first with one government, then another, with an extraordinary instinct for backing the winning side. He himself ascribed it to luck: "I have been lucky all my life," he said to me a few years ago in one of his rare expansive moods; "if I hadn't been, I should have been murdered long ago, or else serving a life sentence in some prison."

The two rising stars of politics and finance met for the first time somewhere about the year 1910 and realised that they could be useful to one another. Venizelos needed financial support for his party, Zaharoff powerful protection in his varying activities. It was a curious partnership, each wary of the other, perpetually on guard, yet outwardly presenting a united front. The years brought them fame and success, added power. Zaharoff's millions paved the way to the dictatorship of Venizelos, rescued him on more than one occasion from tight situations with his cabinet, aided him both in his flight and in his return to Athens.

Zaharoff found Greece under the sway of his old friend a useful base for his network of political activities. The support of Venizelos was of the utmost value to him in his dealings with other foreign powers. And so it went on until a few years ago, when the partnership ended dramatically in Monte Carlo with a violent quarrel between the two men. Venizelos rushed out of Zaharoff's suite at the Hôtel de Paris and left that night for Athens.

Sir Basil, an old man then, but mentally vigorous as ever, with the same unquenchable spirit in the frail body, was implacable in his enmity. "He tried to get the better of me," he told a friend. "No man has ever done that yet, though some have tried and regretted it."

They never met again, but each was constantly aware of the other. How the battle was waged, or who was the victor, no one knows. But the stars of both were

waning. Sir Basil lost the greater part of his vast fortune; Venizelos became an exile and died in France. His old friend followed him to the grave less than a year later.

Basil Zaharoff was behind the offer of the Throne of Portugal which was made me in 1912. He was very anxious for me to accept it and promised unlimited financial support. I answered that the proposition did not tempt me. In the first place, the deposed King Manuel was one of my closest friends, and I wondered what part Mr. Zaharoff had played in the events preceding his abdication; it was rumoured to be an active one. But quite apart from that, nothing under the sun would induce me to accept a kingdom. A crown is too heavy a thing to be put on lightly. It has to be worn by those born to that destiny, but that any man should willingly take on the responsibility in these troubled times, not being constrained by duty to do so, passes my comprehension.

Two other thrones have been offered me since then, Lithuania and Albania. The Lithuanian proposition originated, I believe, among Lithuanians in the United States, probably influenced by the fact of my having an American wife. I answered that my head was too bald to prevent the crown from slipping off. They then sent me as an inducement the detailed description of their palace, built by Catherine the Great, together with the proposed plans for renovating it if I decided to occupy their throne. They also felt it necessary to warn me that the Civil List (by which they meant the royal perquisites) would be less in my case than in that of other sovereigns, since I had a rich wife! But they assured me that, although she was an American, she would be "an absolutely legitimate queen." They were astounded at finding her just as determined to decline the offer as I was. They had evidently thought that no woman, least

of all an American woman, could resist so dazzling a prospect. What she actually said was that she would sooner be a lamp-post in New York!

In the years immediately preceding the World War the whole Balkans was a sort of witches' cauldron in which wars and rumours of wars simmered perpetually over a fire assiduously fed by the great protecting powers. The inevitable end was a conflagration that spread throughout Europe, but no one had the wit to realise it at the time. So Greece, Turkey, Bulgaria and the rest of the little Balkan States hammered away at one another with good heart until the issue became so confused that the former allies turned upon one another and the rest of the world lost count of who was fighting whom and why.

In 1912 Greece joined forces with Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro against Turkey and, after a campaign that lasted only three weeks, our army, under the leadership of my brother Constantine, the Crown Prince, won a decisive victory. I was with him as one of the officers on his staff when he entered Salonika on November 10 with his victorious troops, and I shall never forget the scenes of wild enthusiasm that greeted him. From a military point of view his was an achievement on which any general might have prided himself, but the crowds lining the streets saw him not only as a conqueror, but as the Heaven-sent deliverer who had freed them from the hated Turkish yoke.

Some months later my brother left with his troops for Epirus, and I with him, leaving my father with a small force to occupy the city.

In 1913 King George entered into what should have been one of the happiest years of his reign. We had emerged successfully from the Turkish War; our diplomacy was holding the Bulgarians in check in spite

of strained relations. A time of peace and prosperity seemed assured. He made up his mind to abdicate in the autumn, in favour of my brother Constantine.

"I shall have reigned fifty years in November, and it's long enough for any king," he said when we tried to dissuade him: "I think I'm entitled to a little rest in my old age. Besides, Jino will be able to do far more with the country than ever I could. He has been born and bred here, while I am always a foreigner."

His intention was to abdicate on the anniversary of his accession, but fate ruled otherwise.

One morning in March he was walking in the streets of Salonika, accompanied only by an A.D.C., when he was shot by an assassin. The bullet, fired at close range, pierced his heart and, although he was taken immediately to the nearest military hospital, nothing could be done.

The murderer was turned over to the police, but although every possible enquiry was made, nothing was discovered, for those behind the crime took care to guard themselves against any revelations he might make by silencing him for ever. Before he could be brought to trial he was found dead in the prison courtyard. The evidence pointed to the fact that he had been pushed out of the window.

My brother Constantine and I were at the Army headquarters in Janina when we received the telegram telling us of the death of the King. We went immediately to Athens and, after Constantine had taken the oath of allegiance to the Constitution, we left for Salonika on the royal yacht. It was a sad voyage, so different from the joyful reunion we had planned that summer.

Venizelos accompanied us and I, who sat next to him at meals, had to fight down my distaste. It was difficult to reconcile his loud protestations of sympathy with his fox-like smile and certain aspects of my father's death.

The night before my father died my brother Constantine and I had an experience which we could never explain. A lady attached to the Red Cross in Janina was very much interested in spiritualism and persuaded us to take part in an experiment in automatic writing that evening. While the rest of the party went for a picnic on the beautiful Lake of Janina the three of us sat at a table covered by a large sheet of white paper. For at least half an hour we waited solemnly for something to happen, then suddenly the pencil which the lady and I were holding between us gave a violent jerk and began to write. For a few minutes it flew over the paper so quickly that we could hardly keep our fingers on it, then it stopped as abruptly as it had begun.

The message was for Constantine. It promised him fame and glory, the winning of two wars and after that much sorrow. But below that was written the word "Death" several times, and then, "To-morrow." The rest was illegible.

The next day my father was assassinated.

No Sovereign was ever more popular than Constantine in the early days of his reign. The Greeks, romantic and impressionable, were ready to idolise the soldier King who had fought side by side with his men, shared camp life with them and led them to victory. He had liberated South Macedonia, Epirus and the Aegean Islands from the Turkish yoke. They began to remember the old legend that Constantinople should be given back to Greece and the Christian Church restored there when a King Constantine and a Queen Sophie reigned in Athens. The tradition probably owed its origin to the fact that the last emperor to fall on the ramparts of Byzantium was named Constantine and his wife was Sophie, but the people had a touching faith in it.

The Second Balkan War only served to increase the

new King's popularity. The relations between Greece and Bulgaria had been strained ever since the fall of Salonika, which both countries claimed. Finally, the Bulgarian military party, impatient of delay, decided to dispense with diplomatic parleys, took the law into its own hands and fell upon the Greeks in Salonika without even making a declaration of war.

King Constantine, who was still Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army, led it to victory once again and inflicted a smashing defeat on the enemy. The welcome he received on his return to Athens was stupendous. Thanksgiving services were held in all the churches, crowds besieged the Palace, waited for hours to get even a glimpse of him.

The Treaty of Bucarest successfully concluded the Second Balkan War and ceded to Greece the greater part of Thrace. At last the country was free. The King thankfully laid aside his sword and began to make plans for reconstruction.

The spring and summer of 1914 were the most carefree, the most prosperous Greece had ever known.

I was in London for that last brilliant pre-war season of 1914 and it was then that I became engaged to Nancy Leeds.

Long afterwards she told me that my father, whom she had met in Aix-les-Bains a year or two before his death, had hinted that he would like us to marry, but, with his usual tact, he never told me this, only spoke of her casually and said he thought her charming. He did not even introduce us, for he was enough of a fatalist to believe that if it was destined so we should meet one day, and we did—at a dinner party given by Lady Paget in Paris.

I thought that first evening that of all the women I knew not one of them had the charm of Nancy Leeds.

She was pretty rather than beautiful; on the surface she reminded one of a Dresden china figure with her fair hair, small, regular features and flawless pink and white colouring. But underneath it she had an exceptionally keen brain, a tremendous sense of humour and the kindest heart in the world. There are so few people to-day who bring to earth that supreme gift of kindness, for we live in an age that has ceased to value so simple a virtue, and when a training in all-in wrestling would seem only too often the best preparation for life.

No one ever appealed to Nancy in vain; no one ever asked her for money without getting it. She gave away far more than she spent on herself. At the time of her death the newspapers wrote whole columns on her extravagance and on the sums she had spent on clothes and jewels, but they did not tell of the many other women who had been dressed by her for years, nor of the hundreds of people who lived on the money she allowed them. Nothing pleased her more than to spend her money on giving others pleasure. She paid school fees for children she had never seen, sent tired shop-girls for holidays at her expense, and bought pictures she really did not want so that the salesman could get his commission.

I saw Nancy many times in Paris that spring, and when she went over to London I followed her. One evening at the opera in Covent Garden I asked her to marry me.

We planned to be married almost immediately, but instead we had to wait six years!

CHAPTER VIII

OUTBREAK OF WORLD-WAR—UNREST IN GREECE—FIRE

"I THINK that at last we can look forward to peace," King Constantine said to me in June.

In August Greece, along with the rest of the world, was thrown into chaos by the Great War.

I was in London then, staying with Queen Alexandra at Marlborough House, and stood at the window to look down at the immense crowd in front of Buckingham Palace, waiting in a silence that could almost be felt while the last moments of the ultimatum to Germany expired; and when at length the clock boomed out the hour, one deep breath was drawn by all those thousands, like a mighty sigh. Then the tension relaxed and a second later everyone was laughing, singing patriotic songs and shouting for the King and Queen.

King George went out on to the balcony. His face was white and drawn; he had grown years older in the last week. Tears stood in his eyes as he listened to the frantic cheers.

The Crown Prince of Greece was in London with me at that time and King Constantine telegraphed asking us to return to Athens immediately. But it was easier said than done. We tried to get tickets, only to find that all the trains had been commandeered by the military authorities. We could not even get as far as Paris, for the French railways had completely abandoned their passenger service and were running only east and west, carrying troops.

Nancy Leeds had chartered a yacht for Cowes, which

was, of course, scratched, like all other peace-time pursuits, and offered to lend it to us so that we could get to Lisbon, but at the last moment, when we were actually on board, we were warned not to sail by the Admiralty, who feared that there would be no possibility of the yacht's returning to England. Finally, by sheer luck, we got a cabin that had been cancelled only the day before on a P. and O. steamer sailing from Tilbury, which would land us at Port Said. From there we could go to Alexandria and on to Piræus.

It was an eventful voyage lasting ten days. In the Bay of Biscay we were chased by a German cruiser, but after some thrilling moments of uncertainty, a British battleship came on the horizon and turned the tables on our pursuer.

The Germans would have had a rich haul if they had sunk us, for our boat was filled with English dignitaries hurrying to their posts.

In Athens we found opinion divided over Greece's role in the War. The King and Venizelos were at variance from the beginning. Venizelos had just made what was to prove one of the most fateful moves of the Great War.

When we passed through Alexandria we heard that the two historic German warships, the *Goeben* and the *Breslau*, had been coaled in Greece while the British fleet was in pursuit.

By whose authority this was done was not revealed until later when Venizelos, in a meeting of the Cabinet, accepted responsibility for it. He had made one of those almost incredible blunders that from time to time during the course of his career mystified even his staunchest supporters. In this particular case he had acted on an impulse, without any ulterior motive, but the results were both far-reaching and disastrous. Sir Basil Thomson who, in his brilliant book *The Allied Secret Service in Greece*, lays bare the amazing facts behind the

Allies' treatment of King Constantine, states that this " impulsive folly " of Venizelos " laid upon his shoulders a heavier responsibility for the miseries of the nations than is borne by any man living except the ex-Kaiser."

The story Venizelos told the Cabinet was that he was aroused from his bed in the early hours of the morning with a request that coal should be supplied to two German merchant ships to clear the Cape. He admitted that he knew the coal was destined for the *Goeben* and *Breslau*, but explained that since the Cabinet had previously decided to coal Allied ships of war, he felt that it would be a breach of Greek neutrality to refuse the same favour to Germany. He therefore wrote on one of his own visiting cards instructions to the harbourmaster of the Piræus, telling him to dispose of eight hundred tons of coal to a coal merchant of the name of Plock, for the use of a German merchant ship anchored at the Piræus.

Venizelos was perfectly aware of the fact that Germany considered Turkey as her ally, and that the two warships were bound for the Bosphorus. His contention that he was merely fulfilling the obligations of a neutral was absurd, for the code stipulated that ships of war should be furnished " with sufficient coal to carry them to their nearest port," and eight hundred tons was grossly in excess of that amount.

The names of the *Goeben* and *Breslau* will go down to history, for the role they played in the destiny of nations was fantastic. Had they not got through into the Dardanelles, Turkey would, in all probability, never have entered the War, for her Cabinet showed a strong majority in favour of neutrality. But with two German warships threatening to bombard Constantinople unless she declared against the Allies, she had no choice.

On the other hand, once the Dardanelles had been closed, the Russian Black Sea fleet was immobilised and Russia could receive neither munitions nor supplies from her Allies. Without them she was powerless to continue

her victorious campaign, and her reverses at the front and shortage of food were directly responsible for the Revolution.

The Greek Government had at the very outbreak of hostilities voted for neutrality, yet by the middle of August Venizelos was doing his utmost to upset this vote. With his usual optimism he insisted that the War would be over in a month, and that if Greece was to be on the winning side she should join the Allies without delay. Finding this proposal caused dissension among the Ministers, he proceeded, without consulting them or King Constantine, to sound the various Allied Ministers in Athens. But the reply was that their respective countries felt it undesirable that the War should be carried into the Eastern Balkans.

With the passing of the years Venizelos had subtly changed his demeanour. His smile was as fox-like as ever, but he was no longer obsequious, could even be called arrogant. Finding himself unable to put the King in his pocket according to plan, he no longer hesitated to cross swords with him.

The Great Powers, now deeply involved in a grim struggle, all wooed Greece because of her key position. The Austrian Government, acting on the policy of reopening old scars, declared that in the event of a conflict between Greece and Bulgaria, Austria would not consider Greece an enemy. The Kaiser telegraphed repeatedly to King Constantine urging him to come in on the side of Germany, taking no notice of his refusals, until my brother grew tired of it and announced his intention of sending back his German decorations and Field-Marshal's baton.

The Allies, on the other hand, were equally persistent and their proposals received ready support from Venizelos, whose zeal convinced the Entente Powers that he alone of all Greek statesmen was to be trusted. In order to give colour to this role he deliberately misrepresented

the King's hesitation to enter the War as being inspired by pro-German sympathies. The fact that Queen Sophie was the Kaiser's sister made the story plausible enough to be widely believed.

Historians will, I think, do justice to King Constantine when the world grows wiser and no longer glorifies the making of war. He had already proved himself an able general and brought his country successfully out of two wars, small wonder that he did not wish to see it plunged into another. His dream of a peaceful and prosperous Greece was so near attainment. So, throwing his personal popularity to the winds, he clung to the policy of neutrality and refused the Allies' demand for active co-operation.

At the same time he was consistent in his goodwill towards the Allied cause and rendered invaluable aid to Serbia. The National Bank of Greece opened foreign credits for her, allowed her to form a base at Salonika and, when the great Austrian offensive of November began, King Constantine readily sanctioned the loan of nearly all his artillery munitions to her. This undoubtedly turned the tide, for the Serbians were retreating simply for lack of support from their big guns. Within a week twenty thousand shells reached them and they rallied and drove back the Austrians.

King Constantine repeatedly gave practical advice to Entente representatives, pointing out the futility of pursuing negotiations with Turkey and Bulgaria, since the Kaiser had already concluded an alliance with these countries. In the case of Bulgaria he had ample proof of his statements.

During August, 1914, the German Military Attaché in Athens asked Colonel Metaxas, the Greek Chief of Staff, what action Greece would take in the event of an attack upon Servia by Germany, Austria and Bulgaria. " We should mobilise immediately," answered Metaxas,

A week later the Bulgarian Army began holding its military manœuvres close to the Serbian frontier, and King Constantine immediately wired to the Kaiser that if they continued he would mobilise his army. The very next day the manœuvres were suddenly stopped and the Bulgarian troops were demobilised.

The Admiral communicated the news to Mr. Asquith, yet, in spite of this, the Allies refused to be convinced, and continued their futile and undignified overtures to Bulgaria to the bitter end.

With regard to the tragic and costly blunder of the Dardanelles, King Constantine refused to participate in it from the start, maintaining that the risk was too great and the prospect of success too remote to justify the sacrifice of the lives of his subjects. But he proved his friendship to the Allies by giving them the plans drawn up by the Greek General Staff for attacking Constantinople by land instead of by sea, where its defences were obviously impregnable.

But this gesture of goodwill did nothing to dispel the atmosphere of suspicion which was being created around him. The Allied Press had begun its insistent propaganda. Insinuations against King Constantine and suggestions that there were German influences at the Court of Athens began to appear in the newspapers. In reality there had never been any love lost between King Constantine and his brother-in-law.

The Kaiser had little use for sentiment in family ties. After his sister Sophie married and embraced the Greek Orthodox religion he cut her out of his life. For some years she was not even allowed to visit Germany.

Long afterwards, when he had lost his throne and all it stood for, and retired to Doorn, a broken, disappointed old man, to live out the rest of his days there, she went to see him on his seventieth birthday. It was the first time brother and sister had met since the War, and

warm, forgiving Sophie went there with affection in her heart. She too was an exile, mourning the husband and son she had lost.

She came back hurt and embittered. Through all their conversation the Kaiser never once touched on any personal subject, never alluded either to her past sorrows or future plans. They talked amiably and politely like two strangers meeting for the first time.

But of these family issues the general public, of course, know nothing, and poor Queen Sophie became bitterly unpopular in Athens during the War and remained so for many a long year afterwards. It was natural enough, the war fever was at its height in every country. In Russia the Czarina was an object of dislike and suspicion because she too had been a German princess. Even in cool-headed England the Royal Family had to take the name of Windsor, and the Battenbergs had to change their name to Mountbatten.

In 1915 King Constantine was so ill that for days his life was despaired of. At length he recovered, but he had lost much of his vigour and the capacity for crisp decision that had carried him through so many difficulties in the past. He was no longer master of the situation.

Venizelos was inch by inch undermining his authority. The Minister was more autocratic than any monarch; time and again he coolly set aside the opinions of his Cabinet, acted on his own initiative without even taking the trouble to consult them. Inveterate gambler with his own fate and that of his countrymen, his one idea was to drag Greece into the War, at no matter what cost. His whole career is a startling example of the evil of allowing frock-coated politicians to meddle in matters of which they are completely ignorant. How many thousands of lives were lost in the last War through the crass stupidity of elderly statesmen directing battles from their comfortable chairs in Whitehall, in the Quai d'Orsay, in Potsdam—in every belligerent country—



Loving by
Nancy
1920

PRINCE CHRISTOPHER'S FIRST WIFE, WHO WAS
MRS. B. LEEDS BEFORE HER MARRIAGE TO HIM

moving their armies about like pawns in the game of warfare, will never be known.

Gradually the situation in Greece developed into a duel between the King and Venizelos. The King, uncertain like the rest of the world in those early years of the War of the ultimate victory of the Allies, was unwilling to risk his country, however deep his sympathy with the Allied cause. His army was his pride; he had led it to victory so often. Aware of the danger from Bulgaria, he hesitated to fling it into the mêlée against overwhelming odds.

Venizelos, on the other hand, had no such scruples. He was a political sadist. His popularity with the Allies meant far more to him than the interests of his country. Whatever motive he was actuated by it certainly was not patriotism. He would willingly have sanctioned the splitting up of Greek territory to be offered by the Allies as bribes to other nations. The suggestion that Greece should be blockaded as an effectual means of forcing her into the War was secretly sponsored by him. In a speech by M. Abrami, a French Deputy, before the Commission of the Army, he was quoted as having said: "Give nothing to Greece, neither corn, nor coal, nor flour, nor money. A sustained blockade, a continued pressure alone will show them that you are great powers and that you are determined. If you maintain the pressure long enough, despite all official outcries, very soon this nation of merchants, shipbuilders and business men, feeling their interests at stake, will understand who is at the bottom of the trouble and will take action."

At the same time the Venezelist Press in Athens launched a systematic campaign against King Constantine and the Royal Family. This was supported largely by Sir Basil Zaharoff, who contributed a loan of several million francs for Allied propaganda in Greece. Yet, in spite of it, the Greek populace remained unwavering in its loyalty to the King. Statesmen might intrigue, Allied

representatives might sneer, but the man in the street was influenced by neither. In the first place he cordially detested Venizelos, whatever a section of the Press might pretend.

I shall never forget a strange ceremony I witnessed in the early spring of 1916, where hundreds of people assembled on a plot of waste ground near the Cavalry Barracks to take part in a solemn Anathema against him.

It was the only time I have ever seen this age-old rite, which has survived from Pagan days, but still exists in the Greek and Roman Catholic churches. I stood on a hill opposite the place and watched the crowd arrive, people of all classes, men, women and children, each carrying a large stone. Then, after the Bishop of Athens, who had been brought there against his will, had recited special prayers, an old man advanced a few steps and hurled his stone into the space that had been cleared in front of the assembly, cursing the name of Venizelos as he did so. Another and then another followed his example. The ancient formula was taken up even by the shrill voices of the children and the stones piled up into a pyramid fifteen feet high. And when the Bishop had pronounced the Anathema—call it a prayer or curse as you will—and extinguished a candle, they all departed home, apparently well satisfied to wait for that terrible doom they had invoked to be fulfilled on Venizelos.

But it must be recorded that nothing happened. Perhaps the Anathema has lost its potency, or perhaps it was better adapted to an age when its fulfilment was aided by more strenuous measures. But whatever the cause, Venizelos remained serenely untouched by it; what is more, he flourished like the green bay tree.

He was making his plans now, paving the way to the inevitable climax. His next step was to set up at Salonika a Triumvirate composed of himself, Admiral Condouriotis—a former A.D.C. of my father's, who after-

wards became President of the Greek Republic—and General Danglis. After that he had the country in his own hands.

If this triangular scheme had been prevented—as it should have been—contemporary Greek history might have read very differently. As a matter of fact I was the first to hear of the plot, and there was ample time to have headed it off if I could have only made the authorities realise the need of immediate action.

My brother Nicholas and his wife had taken a house in Kephisia, midway between Tatoi and Athens, and I was staying with them that summer. One night I was awakened by thundering knocks at the front door. One of my friends had come to bring me urgent news. He told me that he had heard the report on good authority that Venizelos was about to leave with two of his closest associates for Salonika and, on making investigations, he had found it to be true.

Nicholas was in Russia, Andrew in France, both sent on missions by the King trying to straighten out matters with the Allies, and I was alone in the house with my sister-in-law and her children. There was no time to lose, whatever was to be done must be done by me.

I threw on my clothes and, with my friend, raced off at top speed to Athens in my little two-seater, faithful companion of so many adventures. We drove straight to the house of the Crown Prince and woke him. He advised us to go immediately to the Prime Minister, Mr. Kalogoropoulos.

Neither of us altogether relished the prospect of rousing up that dignified official and his household at two in the morning, but we drove off through the deserted streets.

On arriving at the house we rang the bell several times without result. There was a light in the study window and stones and pebbles are plentiful in the gutters of Athens, so we threw a handful or two against the pane,

whereupon the Prime Minister's head appeared cautiously reconnoitring from another window. The combined light of the moon and a nearby street lamp, and my shouts having satisfied him as to our identity, he came down and opened the door.

Excitedly we told him the news. He stared at us in stupefaction: "It is impossible. You must be mistaken," he repeated again and again. "Admiral Condouriotis would never lend himself to such a thing. When something of this was rumoured once before, he gave his word that he would never intrigue against the King, and he has always been an honourable man."

"But it is true. We have proof," I said. "Something must be done at once or it will be too late."

Finally the Prime Minister consented to telephone to the Minister of the Navy.

The Minister of the Navy, dragged from his warm bed, was at first resentful, and then, when he heard the story, frankly disbelieving. He, too, declared that neither Venizelos nor the Admiral would be capable of such treachery. It was a false report, he insisted, spread to create a panic. He advised us to let the whole thing drop.

I since discovered that he was in the plot too.

His vigorous assurance crystallised the reluctance of the Prime Minister into obstinacy. He would take no further action, nor could all our arguments move him. We could only return home crestfallen.

Even the King did not take the situation seriously, for when I was at the Palace the next day he said to me with a sly smile: "I hear you got very excited last night," and let the matter drop at that.

But two days later Venizelos, Admiral Condouriotis and General Danglis quietly boarded a destroyer and departed for Salonika! It was the beginning of the end.

Our names were blackened throughout Europe by this time. Every Allied newspaper had scathing articles on King Constantine and his family; friends of long

standing turned against us. And to this was added the incessant strain of plots and rumours of plots within the country.

The summer of 1916 was an unlucky one in every way. It began with the fire at Tatoi. I was at Kephisia then, and woke one day certain that I could smell burning. However, as no one else noticed anything, I thought I must be mistaken.

Later in the morning the telephone rang. It was Queen Sophie who telephoned to my sister-in-law from Tatoi, six miles away, to tell her that a fire had been reported and that the King had gone out to investigate.

I looked out and saw faint spirals of smoke curling up from one corner of the forest, but neither I nor any of the household attached any importance to it.

It was a day of breathless heat, the very earth was parched and dry, with only three degrees of moisture. A hush hung over the forest, even the birds were silent.

In the afternoon my sister-in-law Helen and I and an American friend of mine, Sheldon Whitehouse, from the Legation in Athens, who was staying with us at Kephisia, went over to play tennis at the Russian Legation. At the end of the first set one of us looked over in the direction of Tatoi. A dense pall of black smoke hung high in the sky. The whole forest was ablaze.

Alarmed now as to the fate of the rest of the family, Sheldon Whitehouse and I got into my little runabout and started off to Tatoi as quickly as we could. Half-way there we met a car in which were seated Queen Sophie and her two youngest children, bound for the comparative safety of Kephisia. She called to us that the King was still at the fire, so we drove straight on.

By now the fire had reached alarming proportions. With every mile the smoke grew thicker, a red glow had spread over the whole horizon.

There is no sight more terrible nor more beautiful

than a forest of fir trees on fire. The flames leap with the speed of lightning from tree to tree; blazing fir-cones are flung crackling and hissing in all directions; the air is full of the scent of burning pine.

At Tatoi we came upon a scene of chaos. By this time a belt of fire encircled the entire forest. Half the cluster of buildings belonging to the Court was already in flames and people were rushing wildly in all directions, some trying to fight the fire, others carrying out pictures and furniture.

The King's house had already been burnt to the ground and he was sitting in front of my mother's house some yards away, surrounded by articles of furniture of every description. One of his feet was bandaged. Earlier in the day he had had the narrowest escape of his life.

He had gone out with a party of helpers to fight the fire and Queen Sophie and her youngest child had accompanied them. In the excitement none of them realised until it was too late that the flames which had broken out in several places were closing in on them more and more, cutting off their retreat. Then, in the horror of finding themselves trapped, they scattered in all directions, trying first one path and then another, only to find the way blocked by fire.

Queen Sophie, who was the first to see their danger, caught up the child and ran without stopping for a mile and a half until she stumbled, half-fainting from fright and exhaustion, into safety.

The King, who had known every inch of the forest since he was a boy, remembered one goat track which would most probably still be safe. It was a slender chance, but their only one and, calling to the others to follow him, he started down it with his son Paul. It was a race with death. The flames leapt and crackled on either side of them as they ran; the clouds of smoke were so thick that they could hardly see the road ahead.

They were on the edge of the forest a few feet from safety when the King caught his foot on a tree root and fell, spraining his ankle. Two soldiers, seeing what had happened, ran to the rescue and carried him into the open, but only just in time. A moment later the two fires met and the road was closed.

Unfortunately the rest of the party were too panic-stricken to keep to the path. They ran wildly until they were overcome by the smoke and sixteen of them perished in the flames.

I, too, nearly lost my life that day. Finding my brother helpless in his chair, I offered to go up to the Tower, which overlooked the entire forest, to see whether the main road into Athens was still clear.

The Tower and its contents had been the joy of our childhood. Down below was a collection of statues and marbles unearthed during excavations. From there a winding flight of wooden steps led up to two rooms in one of which were stuffed wolves, foxes and other fauna of Greece, and another which was lined with shelves on which stood gruesome-looking jars containing defunct snakes and various reptiles preserved in spirits. Still more stairs led to the clock tower, an affair of corrugated iron with a platform surmounted by the Royal Standard.

Stepping on to this platform I saw that the whole pine forest was one mass of flames for miles around. Tatoi was doomed. However, the road was still clear and I was just preparing to go down with this reassuring news when to my horror I saw a great tongue of fire coming straight for the tower. With one leap I flew down the staircase. The fire was just reaching the door as I dashed through it. It was not a second too soon for I had run only a few yards when there was a terrific explosion and blazing wood was flung in all directions. All those jars of alcohol had turned the Tower into a huge torch. Only the Royal Standard was left.

Before nightfall Tatoi was burnt out. The King's house and the buildings surrounding it were reduced to a charred heap; nothing was left of the forest but blackened stumps and the pathetic corpses of thousands of animals of every sort that had perished in the fire.

The next day the police in their investigations discovered empty petrol-cans at three different places in the forest. It was fairly easy to connect them with one's own suspicions and the fact that one of the most persistent rumours circulated in Athens at that time was that Queen Sophie had a private cable installed at Tatoi by means of which she communicated with German submarines!

Anonymous letters threatening our lives were so common in those days that we grew to expect them as a matter of course and paid little attention to them. All the same, there was the unpleasant feeling that some day or other they might be made good. We had more than one fright.

Every Tuesday the King used to dine *en famille* at our house in Kephisia.

One Tuesday the King's A.D.C. came to me after lunch with a very serious face. He had received an anonymous letter that morning warning him that in consequence of a plot to assassinate the King, all the wines in the villa at Kephisia had been poisoned.

I summoned our old butler. After telling him what I had heard I ordered him to take the strictest precautions that night, to serve no wines except old bottles that had been in the cellars for years and to examine every bottle himself.

The faithful old servant departed white and shaking to the cellar where, without saying anything to me, he began trying out every bottle on himself. Fortunately the experiment had no result except the natural one . . . he got somewhat drunk.

By dinner-time it had worn off and he was able to

wait on us and serve his personally tested wines. But even so we had our scare. Directly after dinner my sister-in-law, Helen, turned to me and told me she had a terrible pain. I nearly dropped, for of course I thought that one bottle had escaped the test. I wondered how in the world I should break it to my brother Nicholas that he was a widower and through my carelessness. But someone else more practical gave Helen a pill and she began to recover. It was indigestion, nothing more.

The events of the first and second of December, 1916, have passed into history.

General Sarrail, commanding the Salonika expedition, to excuse himself for his inaction and incompetence, had stated that he was obliged to keep two entire divisions ready to protect his army from a Greek attack on his rear.

In the light of calm reflection it is obvious that the whole situation was contrived, but war is not a time of calm reflection and the propaganda against King Constantine was cleverly conducted.

The rumour may have appeared at the time plausible, in reality it was absurd. Even if the King had been inclined to throw in his lot with Germany—which he certainly was not—he would hardly have taken a step that could only result in the bombardment of all Greece's ports and her starvation in less than a fortnight. Nevertheless it was believed and reported with different variations.

A Minister whose knowledge of French was limited, grasped the story in the substance rather than in the letter and solemnly wrote in his official report that the Greek troops were preparing to attack General Sarrail's men *dans les dérrières*, with the result that a few days later the French Minister in Athens received a mysterious parcel. On opening it he found it to contain a large assortment of corks and an anonymous letter saying that these were *pour les dérrières de l'armée du Général Sarrail.*

But the situation was a grim joke as far as Greece was concerned, for Sarrail, whose fears had been fostered by Venizelos, urged the Admiral in command of the French fleet to bombard Athens from the sea " without warning and without evacuating the population."

The Allies then demanded the surrender of Greece's guns and ammunition. Nothing could have been better calculated to touch Greek pride on the raw. The entire country, except the party immediately behind Venizelos, clamoured for refusal. The King asked the French Military Attaché to convey a protest to the French Admiral, saying that the Army would not yield to the humiliating demand and that public opinion supported it.

The next morning French naval detachments, backed by a few British and Italians, landed and took up their positions. The Greek garrison was mobilised, but had strict orders on no account to fire. But one shot went off, and to this day history is still debating which side fired it. It was the signal for a pitched battle. In less than five minutes wild confusion reigned. Venizelists armed to the teeth, as though prepared for just such a contingency, leant out of windows or knelt in the streets firing indiscriminately at the soldiers, their own countrymen. A hail of bullets whizzed through the air.

Then as suddenly as the firing had begun, it ceased, and the whole city shook itself back to normality and began to go about its business again. My brother Andrew's wife Alice hurried off to the needlework shop she ran for charity. She had not been there more than an hour when the firing started again and several women who had ventured out for shopping were carried in from the streets where they had been injured.

Regardless of the flying bullets Alice drove home at top speed in her car in a fever of anxiety for her children. She found that they had had a narrow escape, for a bullet had gone through the window of the nursery where

they were playing and flattened itself out against the opposite wall.

I had taken advantage of the lull in the fighting to drive to the house of my brother Nicholas. There we were placidly having tea when we heard the dull roar of heavy guns. The French battleships were shelling Athens!

My chauffeur was waiting outside with my runabout, and I dashed down and sprang into the driver's seat, intending to drive to the Palace as quickly as possible. But the car, with the uncanny perversity that inanimate objects sometimes display, invariably at the most ill-chosen moments, obstinately refused to start. For several agonised minutes the chauffeur and I, two perspiring and desperate men, turned the handle frantically, while the firing in the streets grew incessant and the crack of the rifles was answered by the boom of the guns at sea.

Finally, urged to fresh efforts by the fact that the marksmen in the corner house were deliberately aiming at us (mercifully there were some poor shots in Athens then!) we got the car started and drove off through the bullet-swept streets. Each corner was an ambush; every window had its snipers. By a miracle we reached the Palace uninjured, but just at the gate someone took more careful aim and a bullet whizzed between my head and the chauffeur's. The guard set out in pursuit of the sniper, but at that moment a shell exploded in the opposite corner and every one flew for shelter. I swung into the gates on two wheels!

For an hour the battleships shelled the city. Several of the shells fell in the Palace garden; one landed just outside the window of the King's study, but fortunately it did not explode.

In the midst of it all the Allied Ministers arrived at the Palace in a body for a conference and urged the King to put a stop to the firing. He answered that although

nothing would please him better, they were more capable of doing this than he!

The delegation left the Palace for another conference, this time with the French Admiral at the Zappion, as a result of which the firing ceased.

The Allies got the guns they had asked for and the Greek garrison filed in front of the Allied troops drawn up in formal array and saluted the British, French and Italian flags, in military apology.

CHAPTER IX

ANXIOUS MOMENTS—EXILE—FIRST MARRIAGE

KING CONSTANTINE was now virtually a prisoner of the Allies. Spies surrounded him everywhere, every movement was watched and and reported.

M. Jonnart, the special High Commissioner appointed by the Allies, arrived in Athens with the authority to demand the abdication of the King.

The Prime Minister, Mr. Zaimis, came white-faced and haggard to the Palace to deliver the message. For over an hour he conferred with the King, trying to find a way out of the situation. Failure to comply with the order meant another bombardment of the city, yet, on the other hand, there was the grave possibility of the rising of the populace if their adored King abdicated.

Finally my brother decided not to abdicate but to appoint his second son, Alexander, as King *pro tem.*, after receiving the assurance that he would be permitted to return to his country at the conclusion of the War.

This was given and that afternoon the new King took the oath of allegiance secretly in the ballroom of the Palace. It was a sad ceremony, shorn of all the glory of magnificently robed clergy, congratulatory courtiers and cheering crowds. The Archbishop of Athens hurried through the streets to administer the oath and was smuggled into the Palace by a back door. The only people present were the King Constantine, the Crown Prince and the Prime Minister. The new King

was only a boy, dazed and bewildered; tears stood in his eyes and his voice faltered over the responses.

One thought of that other day only four years before when King Constantine had taken the oath. Those crowds who had cheered him so frenziedly, where were they all now?

My thought was answered by a wail of anguish coming from outside the windows. Hundreds of men and women, having some vague idea of what was happening, had stolen up to the Palace, where they had heard the news that their beloved King Constantine was leaving the country. One by one they took up the cry . . . that age-old lament in a minor key with which the Greeks proclaim death or disaster.

Hearing it, thousands more flocked to the Palace, the streets were black with hurrying people. For twenty-four hours they surrounded the Palace in a dense mob. No one could go in or out.

They might not know the rights or wrongs of the situation, swayed first by one rumour and then another as they had been for months, but they knew that their King was there and that they were not going to have him sent away from them.

A crowd can be terrifying enough seen *en masse* as one embodied emotion of love or hate, especially a Greek crowd, composed of a simple people, lovable, childish in many ways, but it is after all personal to the last degree. Every one of those vast thousands saw King Constantine at that moment as someone who belonged to them. They had criticised him freely, rent him among themselves, but they were not going to have others rend him.

They began to remember his victories as Crown Prince, the day of his accession, to remind one another of how much they had loved him. Why, it was only two years ago that they had come to this same palace for news of him when he was so ill and when his life

was despaired of, and as a last hope, the bishops had sent for the miraculous eikon of the Madonna from the Island of Tinos; how they had stood for hours at the harbour watching for the battleship that was to bring it. And when it had been sighted they had lined the road all the way up to the Palace and fallen on their knees to pray for the King's life as the eikon was borne past them. Ah! that had been a day of rejoicing then, for, as everyone knew, the King began to get better from the hour the Madonna was placed in his room. There were the birds, too; they had all seen them, the flock of white birds that had appeared suddenly in the sky just as the eikon was being taken on board the ship and had flown beside it all the way to Athens, though no one knew what birds they were, for they had never been seen before in Greece. Some had said they were angels that had taken on that form to guard the eikon and cure the King. But whatever they were, it had been a good omen and the King's reign should have brought happiness to Greece and not been allowed to end this way.

So they talked and wept and argued for hours and meanwhile we were all shut up in the Palace. None of us was allowed to go home lest by some means we should spirit away King Constantine.

Night fell and still the crowd kept vigil. Inside the Palace the tension was almost unbearable. The servants clustered together in frightened groups. In the early hours of the morning we all tried to get some rest, slept anywhere we could, three or four in a room, on sofas and arm-chairs. King Constantine's own page slept across his door on the floor. We woke in broad daylight, most of us stiff and cramped, threw on our clothes and hurried to the windows. The Palace was surrounded by a bigger crowd than ever.

My brother Nicholas tried to humour them, spoke to them through the gates and begged them to let us go

home and wash. "There's enough water here, isn't there?" they yelled, and refused to let us set foot outside.

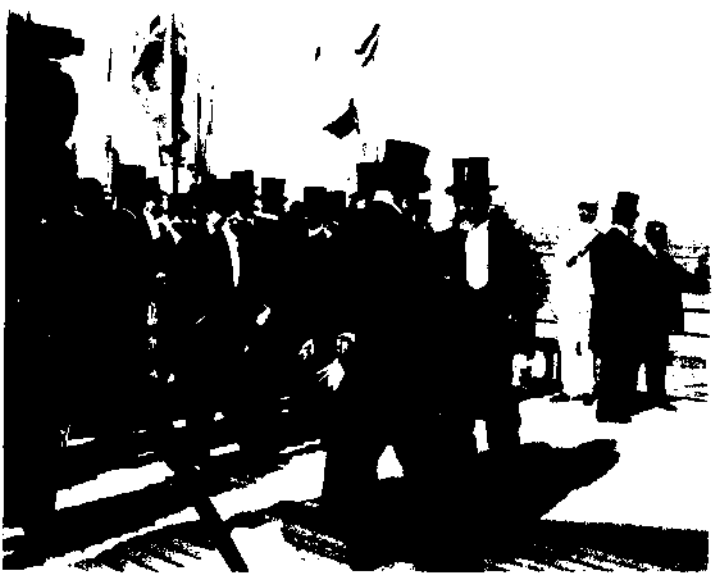
As the hours passed our plight became dangerous, for the lamentations turned to hysteria and there were cries that: "It would be better to kill the King than let him leave Greece," cries isolated at first but after a while caught up and echoed by hundreds. Finally a ruse was decided upon.

The word was circulated that the King would leave by a back gate of his private garden. Carriages and motors were sent there to keep up the illusion and thither the crowd rushed in a body, crying that if they could not have their King alive they would at least keep his corpse among them! In the confusion no one noticed other cars slip quietly into the big garden of the Palace. The moment everyone's attention was concentrated on the private gate we all made a dash for the other one and ran as hard as we could. Queen Sophie, who had been ill, lagged behind and two of us seized her under the arms and almost carried her along, spurred on by the yells of the crowd on discovering that it had been tricked. We could hear the wooden railings cracking in the general stampede back to the front of the Palace, but by that time the King, Queen Sophie and their children had hurled themselves unceremoniously into the cars. The Crown Prince drove off lying on the floor of one, with his legs waving wildly out of the open door . . . and started for Tatoi.

A stunned silence fell over the crowd, then everyone looked upwards, for the sky had darkened suddenly and great heavy drops of rain began to fall, an occurrence so rare in a Greek summer that the people, deeply superstitious at the best of times, immediately hailed it as a bad omen. Several of them, on finding that the King had really gone, tried to kill themselves.

Next day there was an infinitely touching scene at





KING CONSTANTINE WITH HIS STAFF, WHICH INCLUDES GENERAL METAXAS (*second from left*) AND GENERAL DANGLIS (*extreme right*)

PREMIER VENIZELOS AWAITING KING CONSTANTINE'S RETURN AFTER THE BALKAN WARS

Tatoi, for the people, numbed by despair, came to bid farewell to their King. All day long they came, in a steady stream. Smart cars bearing Ministers and Society people, lorries laden with workmen, peasants in their rough country carts, farmers on horseback, city workers on bicycles. Many of them had brought little gifts of flowers and other things. They crowded around him in the garden, knelt at his feet and begged him over and over again to stay with them. They were like bewildered children; it was impossible to make their simple minds realise that he was only leaving them for their own good.

They went with him down to the pier when he boarded the royal yacht, pressing so close to the edge of the water that a number of those in front were pushed in and had to be rescued by other boats. The whole bank was lined with men and women waving frantically to the solitary figure standing alone in the stern of the boat with his eyes fixed on the shores of his beloved Greece. And when at length the yacht carried him out of sight and their voices calling to him to come back could no longer be heard across the water, they turned away and went home sorrowfully to Athens.

In the days that passed the once gay little capital was like a city of the dead. No one went out in the streets, all the theatres and shops were closed. Those of us of the Royal Family who remained behind lived in an atmosphere of suspicion. Everyone known to have been faithful to King Constantine was put under arrest. Men and women in all walks of life—statesmen, lawyers, writers, officers of both Army and Navy—were mysteriously denounced, hauled before a tribunal and sentenced, some to years of imprisonment, others to banishment in remote islands.

Searches were instituted from house to house. Parties of armed men solemnly ransacked drawers and cupboards for photographs of King Constantine and his family. It was made a punishable offence to sing "The

Son of the Eagle," the song which had been composed in celebration of my brother's victories in the Balkan wars and which had been heard nearly as often as the National Anthem during the four years of his reign.

Once a party of Venizelists on their rounds could hardly believe their own ears when they heard its familiar strains being sung lustily from one of the houses. Following the sound they rushed upstairs to a top room, flung open the door and found an old woman sitting alone in an arm-chair, beating time to the proud song of her parrot. Not troubling to waste time on explanations, they wrung the neck of the unfortunate bird and marched out of the room, slamming the door on the poor old lady's lamentations.

Before long my brother Nicholas was asked to leave Athens. I went with him and his family to Switzerland, where we were joined by Andrew, who had also been ordered to leave Greece.

We had received a solemn assurance before our departure that M. Venizelos would not return to Athens; yet the very next week he was recalled. Allied representatives were waiting at the harbour to receive him when he landed. The streets were lined with steel-helmeted troops and he drove through them with an escort of six cars whose occupants could scarcely be seen for the soldiers standing on the running-boards, rifles in hand. The Acropolis bristled with big guns and machine-guns of every description, giving it the effect of a new set of false teeth. Yet all these precautions would hardly have seemed necessary judging by the flowery articles in the pro-Venizelos Press describing the " stupendous welcome given to the hero of Greece, called back by his people."

The Greeks remained in their own houses behind closed doors and shuttered windows.

When later the " hero " appeared on the balcony in Constitution Square, after taking the oath of office

before the new King, there was no one there to cheer him but a few loafers and the shrill voices of school-children given a holiday to mark the occasion.

We lived in Switzerland for the next three years, spending our summers in Zurich and Lucerne and our winters in St. Moritz.

It was a queer contrast to life in Athens, this hand-to-mouth existence with its daily worries over ways and means. Our private incomes were stopped and we had to depend on borrowed money. This is an unpleasant test to apply to one's friends, but people were amazingly kind. Just when we were wondering where in the world the next quarter's rent was coming from, someone always stepped into the breach. Our household servants had all followed us from Greece and served us out of pure devotion. Months went by without their being paid a cent in wages, but they never complained.

As political exiles we were regarded as dangerous and suspicious characters and our friends could only visit us in the strictest secrecy, for we were subject to a rigid espionage and had all our correspondence censored.

But there were still the mountains to give us the illusion of Greece, and after a while those of us who were young found consolation in the things of every day.

For King Constantine it was harder. He fretted and brooded over the past incessantly until, weakened by worry, he fell ill from a return of his old complaint, pneumonia, and for many days was near death.

One of the worst troubles we had to bear was that for long months we were without news of my mother, who had gone to Russia at the beginning of the Great War to establish a military hospital near her old home, Pavlovsk. At the outbreak of the Revolution she was still there, but we imagined that she would be perfectly

safe among the people who had known her since her childhood.

Unfortunately it had been reported to the Bolshevik Commissioners that arms were being stored at Pavlovsk, with the result that a detachment of soldiers and sailors from the Red Forces were sent to investigate.

My mother was asleep, but her faithful maid, a Russian who had been in her service fifty years, stood in front of her bedroom door. Her fierce old eyes penetrated the crowd of men who stood sheepishly there and recognised several sailors to whom Queen Olga had shown special kindness during periodical visits of theirs to Greece on Russian warships. Telling them that they ought to be ashamed of their ingratitude, she loosed upon them such a flood of abuse that not only they but the rest of the party slunk away from the field.

A few days later, however, they returned with a mob that included several women and ransacked the whole place, taking everything they could lay their hands on.

It was almost impossible to get letters through to Russia at that time and months passed before my mother heard that we were in exile in Switzerland and that King Constantine was dangerously ill. Immediately she got the message she made her preparations to join us, but the Danish Minister had to pull strings unsuccessfully for months before he succeeded in getting a permit for her to leave Russia and a railway carriage for her to travel in.

To her intense relief she was able to get her jewels out of Russia through the clever ruse of her lady-in-waiting, Miss Baltazzi.

It was by no means easy, for jewels were being smuggled over the frontiers almost every week, either by escaping nobility and their friends (usually foreigners attached to one of the embassies) or by thieves, who worked in regular gangs. Their method of getting hold of the jewels was most ingenious. They had spies

whose business it was to keep a watch both on the great families known to possess beautiful jewels and on the various Commissariats. Thus they knew more or less who was under suspicion and they would wait their opportunity until the house was raided and arrests made. Then in the confusion one or two of their number would enter it disguised either as soldiers or servants and get possession of the jewels, whose whereabouts they had previously ascertained. It was a risky proceeding, for the punishment was death, but their organisation was so close that they went undetected for a long time. They generally worked in conjunction with professional smugglers, usually Poles or Finns, who were willing to take their plunder out of the country for a share in it. But after a while their activities were observed and a close watch was kept on every frontier.

My mother had to be particularly careful as her jewels, especially one magnificent set of emeralds, were known to be of great value and had therefore probably been marked down. The lady-in-waiting made a box for them herself, not daring to trust it to anyone else. One day a Greek student called at the house to see Miss Baltazzi with a package of books which were exactly the same size and shape as the box of jewels. When he left he still carried his package, but the box was in it and the books left behind.

He went straight to the Danish Legation and delivered over the jewels, which were sent to Copenhagen.

On leaving Russia my mother had an adventure which might easily have been her last. She travelled with her lady-in-waiting and two maids in a carriage attached to the end of a military train filled with German prisoners of war, who were being repatriated. During the first night she was awakened by the sound of voices outside her window, but supposing that they had stopped outside a station, she took no notice and dropped off to sleep again. The next morning she was

surprised to find that her carriage had been put into the middle of the train for safety. Later she discovered the reason. The voices which she had thought had belonged to railway officials were those of Bolsheviks who, knowing that Queen Olga of Greece was travelling on the train, had tried to uncouple her carriage and leave it on the line to be overtaken by the express which was due ten minutes later. Fortunately the vigilance of the officers had foiled the attempt!

My mother was only the ghost of her old self when she joined us in Switzerland. The months of worry and suspense and the privations she had undergone had worn her to skin and bone. The events in Greece had tortured her with anxiety, far away from us all as she was and unable even to get accurate news; and in addition she had had the grief of losing seventeen members of her family, including the Czar and Czarina and their children, in the Russian Revolution.

Like everyone else who came out of Russia she was half starved, for a diet of stale bread soaked in oil, which was all she had lived on for weeks at a time, is not exactly nourishing and it was some time before she recovered her health.

For the last six years, in the intervals between wars and revolutions, I had been moving heaven and earth to marry Mrs. Leeds. Even in the early days of our engagement we both realised that we should have to wait a while, for there were many obstacles to be overcome before a prince of any royal house can marry a commoner. The situation was even more complicated in Greece, for morganatic marriage does not exist there and any members of the Royal Family wishing to marry can only do so after obtaining the consent of both the King and the head of the Church.

My brother Constantine, to whom I appealed, was not

opposed to my marriage but reluctant to consent to it on account of the precedent it might create. Finally he suggested that the best way out of the difficulty would be for me to change my nationality back to Danish.

In Denmark the position was much simpler. My cousin, Prince Aage, had already married a commoner, the Countess Calvi di Bergolo, renounced his claims to the Throne and dropped his title of Royal Highness, taking the name of Prince Aage, Count of Rosenborg. Two more of the Danish princes followed his example; Viggo, who married Miss Peggy Green of New York, and Eric, whose wife was a Canadian, Miss Booth.

I could have done the same thing if I had relinquished my Greek nationality, but the preliminaries would have involved still further delay and, apart from this, I felt that a time when my family was going through such trouble in Greece was hardly the opportune moment to desert them.

So the months slipped by into years and still we waited, trying to bridge the distance by writing to one another every day. The winters at least were ours, for Mrs. Leeds came to Switzerland every year, though I could never cross the frontier to meet her anywhere else.

At the beginning of 1920 we simultaneously decided that we were not getting any younger and that if we were going to get married at all we should have to cut through the red-tape and grasp our happiness while it was within our reach.

I went to my brother Constantine and told him that unless he objected I intended to marry immediately and forgo the formalities. He replied that he was perfectly willing, but asked me to telegraph to my nephew Alexander, acting as King at Athens.

It was an absurd situation, having to ask my own nephew for permission to get married. However, I sent the wire and the King telegraphed his consent immediately.

So on February 1, 1920, Mrs. Leeds and I were married at the Russian Church in Vevey.

The Press on both sides of the Atlantic had a great deal to say on the subject, especially on the financial side of it. It was not exactly complimentary to either of us. I was represented as having married a rich widow very much older than myself in order to get possession of her money. As a matter of fact my wife was exactly four years older than I and we married for love and no other reason.

Many of the writers assumed that the "vast Leeds fortune" would be used for political propaganda, for buying arms and ammunition to support insurrections against the existing regime in Greece and to restore King Constantine to the throne. Actually my wife's fortune, although a large one, was not colossal, certainly not in comparison with many American fortunes, and, as it was all entailed to pass ultimately to her son, there was no question of speculating with it.

But we were so happy together that we did not concern ourselves with what the rest of the world was thinking of us. We went to Caux for our honeymoon and later returned to Montreux where many of the family came to visit us.

. . . . . .

The Greek Throne was filled by a lonely, unhappy young man, a king in name only. Twenty-four-year-old Alexander, who had been called upon to take his father's place so suddenly, in such tragic circumstances, was one of the most pathetic figures in Europe, although he would have been the last to admit it, for he was not given to self-pity. He had always been thoughtful and independent. Now he shouldered the responsibility with all its disadvantages as quietly, as efficiently as he did everything else.

His crown was a mockery, but he wore it with dignity, convinced that he held it in trust for his father to be

restored to him one day. He was a prisoner in his own palace. His orders were disregarded, he was surrounded night and day by spies. If he showed the slightest preference for any human being, that person immediately disappeared from his household. Only the known enemies of his father and the royal house were permitted to be in his service. They kept up a steady propaganda, lied to him persistently about his family, but it was useless for him to protest; no one listened. The few friends who were able to see him said that his face had grown prematurely lined and sad.

He wrote to his parents many times but the letters never reached them. From the time he bade "good-bye" to his mother on the day of his accession until the day of his death, three years and four months later, she never heard directly from him.

Queen Sophie adored her son and fretted out her heart in secret over him. When in 1918 she heard that he was going to Paris she shed tears of joy: "At last I shall be able to telephone him," and for days she could talk of nothing else.

She put through the call to the hotel where he was staying, waited in breathless suspense for the communication. At last it came!

The voice of Romanos, the Greek Minister, came crisply over the wires: "His Majesty is sorry, but he cannot come to the telephone."

Queen Sophie went quietly away from the telephone. She said nothing, but the disappointment in her face wrung one's heart.

Long afterwards we were told that King Alexander had never even been told of the telephone call!

Two more years passed and his mother still waited, hoping against hope for news of him. She cut out every scanty little notice in the newspapers referring to him, hung on the words of such friends as were able to see him occasionally.

One October day in 1920, Alexander went out with his wolf-dog for a walk in the grounds of Tatoi. As they passed the cottage of the vineyard-keeper, a pet monkey belonging to the keeper's wife flew out and attacked the dog. The King went to the rescue and in separating them got bitten in the ankle by the monkey.

The keeper's wife dressed the wounds, which did not appear serious, and he was able to walk back to the house. But two days later blood-poisoning set in.

Queen Sophie in Switzerland heard what had happened and was frantic with anxiety. From the very first moment she had a premonition that her boy would not get better and begged the authorities, almost going on her knees to them, to let her go to him. But, thanks to Venizelos, they refused permission for her to leave Switzerland.

She took their refusal meekly, for her spirit was broken. She only entreated my mother to go there in her place. This was permitted, but my mother arrived twelve hours too late. King Alexander's troubles were over. He was laid to rest beside his grandfather on the hill at Tatoi.

CHAPTER X

KENT ENGAGEMENT AND WEDDING—COMING EVENTS CAST THEIR SHADOWS BEFORE!

THOSE years of exile did a great thing for my brother Nicholas. They helped him to develop a latent talent for painting, which has been a source of happiness to him ever since.

When he was a child he loved nothing better than to sketch for hours together, but as the years passed there were always so many engagements to be fulfilled, so many things of importance to make claims on his time that he had less and less leisure to devote to his hobby. But with the complete change in our circumstances he turned to his painting seriously, no longer as a pleasant pastime, but as a means of livelihood. Before long he was holding his first exhibition under the name of Nicholas le Prince. The critics had no idea of his identity, for his agent was sworn to secrecy, but they one and all acclaimed him as a new artist of exceptional promise. After that orders began to come in and some, at least, of the pressing worries were disposed of.

His three children, Olga, Elizabeth and Marina grew up in the informal atmosphere of a studio. No rigid code of etiquette oppressed their youthful spirits; their discipline was of the mildest and in the intervals between lessons they ran wild.

Marina was the baby of the family, clever and artistic like her father. When she was a child she used to run into his studio where the rest of the household never dared to penetrate and daub his paints all over her fingers,

in an attempt to copy him. She coaxed him into giving her lessons in drawing and made such progress that he arranged for her to study art seriously. When she grew older they spent many happy hours sketching together.

The years passed. Olga, the eldest sister, became engaged to the Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark and then suddenly a misunderstanding arose and the engagement was broken off. Intense consternation in the family. Every one discussed the situation solemnly in the *salon* after luncheon.

Eleven-year-old Marina sat by the window, drawing as usual. She was so quiet that her elders had forgotten her presence when her voice rang out: "Why the hell should Olga marry him if she doesn't love him? I wouldn't . . ." Her mother smiled: "Out of the mouths of babes . . ."

So Olga was allowed to follow the dictates of her heart rather than royal precedent. Prince Frederick returned to Denmark and married years afterwards the charming Princess Ingrid of Sweden.

Olga met Prince Paul of Jugoslavia and it was a case of love at first sight with them both. Their marriage is ideally happy. Paul, brilliantly clever, sensitive, artistic, an idealist, is precisely the right husband for Olga, who is merry, philosophical and practical to the last degree.

Elizabeth, the second sister, went to stay with them at their little chalet at Bohinj in the Julian Alps and there met Count Toerring, a good-looking young Bavarian. A few months afterwards they were married.

Marina was left with her father and mother and grew up so lovely that, as Nicholas remarked bitterly after one of their rare quarrels: "She could get away with anything."

She was the most unconventional of royal princesses. She studied art seriously in Paris, where they lived most of the time, went about unaccompanied and travelled on the Metro or on motor-buses like thousands of other

girls. There was very little money in those days so she learnt things not usually included in the education of a princess . . . to make herself useful in the running of a house, to arrange flowers as well as any florist, and to wear a dress from a small dressmaker so charmingly that it looked like a model from one of the *grands couturiers*. In the process she developed independence, much knowledge of life and a great understanding of human nature.

By those who do not know her well she is sometimes misjudged, for her very shyness and ultra-sensitive air of reserve create a false impression of hauteur. Underneath it she had a kindness and sympathy that one rarely encounters, an unfailing sense of humour for her own troubles and an unlimited compassion for those of other people.

On one of her visits to England she met Prince George and from the very first they were attracted to one another. I imagine that it was the very fact of her being so unlike the other princesses he had met that appealed to him. Instead of all the solemn ritual of a royal betrothal, the formal introduction, the process of mutual inspection with all the relatives waiting expectantly in the background ready to bestow their blessing, they were able to see one another as often as they wanted. They went out motoring together, dined at London restaurants with parties of other young people and danced at the houses of their friends without any one even commenting on it.

Before long it dawned on their respective families that they had fallen in love, but they both indignantly denied it when questioned.

I was in Rome in the summer of 1934 when I got a mysterious S O S from Prince Paul of Jugoslavia. " Get into the next train and come to Bohinj," he wrote, " we need your help in some very serious business."

Feeling quite alarmed I put through a telephone call. My niece, Olga, came to the 'phone.

" Marina is staying with us," she explained in Greek,

"and George is coming out from England next week. Do you remember you were with us when Elizabeth got engaged to Toto? They are both so happy that I have an idea you will bring Marina luck too."

So in due course I arrived at Bohinj where I found an atmosphere of excitement. Marina and her friend Madame Ralli were already staying at the chalet, which seemed to have walls capable of expanding like a concertina, so many guests were crowded into it every summer.

The following morning Prince George and his equerry, Major Butler, arrived by air, having borrowed the Prince of Wales' 'plane. It was the first time I had seen George for some years and I was struck with his resemblance to his father at his age. He had the same habit of crinkling up his eyes when he smiled; his laugh was absolutely the King's.

The weather was glorious and we spent the next few days in shooting, fishing, rambling through the woods and motoring over to luncheon or tea with my brother Nicholas and his wife, who had taken a villa twenty-five miles away. The atmosphere grew more and more electric.

Then one evening we all played backgammon in the sitting-room until we could hardly keep awake. One by one we departed for bed until George and Marina were left sitting alone at opposite ends of the sofa.

I had been in my bedroom for about half an hour when I discovered that I had left my cigarette-case on the backgammon table. Putting on my dressing-gown I went in search of it.

The door of the sitting-room was open; George and Marina were still seated on the sofa, though no longer, I observed with satisfaction, at the opposite ends of it. I stole back to bed without my case.

The next day their engagement was announced.

My wife and I went to London for their wedding and stayed at Buckingham Palace. It was nine years since my previous visit. Everywhere in the Palace I found evidence of the Queen's exquisite taste in decoration. All dear Queen Alexandra's cherished bric-à-brac had been removed, each room was perfect both in its colour scheme and the furniture that had been chosen to harmonise with it.

I was allotted a valet, to the great annoyance of my wife's maid, who was convinced that she alone was capable of looking after us, but I found his conversation most entertaining. Like many of the servants in Buckingham Palace, he and his family had been in the royal household for several generations, and he informed me with pride that his grandfather had waited on the Prince Consort.

We were on excellent terms from the first evening, when I apologised for swearing in his presence and he turned to assure me, with a twinkle in his eyes, that: "Bad language, it has been my experience, Your Royal 'ighness, occurs in the very best of regulated families . . ."

On the day of the wedding he asked permission to tell me a story which he thought might amuse me and thereupon, with a ludicrously solemn face, propounded a riddle of his own invention: "Why will Princess Marina be able to smooth life for Prince George?" After one or two attempts I gave it up. "Because for twenty-seven years she has been preserved in Greece . . ." he replied triumphantly!

I told the story to the King and Queen later in the day and they both laughed heartily at it and circulated it among the guests at the wedding.

The next morning my valet arrived to wait on me with a rather sour expression. I asked him what was the matter and, after a moment's hesitation, he said: "Your Royal 'ighness repeated my story about the bride and bridegroom."

"Of course I did," I answered. "Why not? We all thought it was very funny." "I am glad Your Royal 'ighness found it entertaining, but unfortunately 'is Majesty repeated it to 'is valet who 'as given me a severe reprimand. 'E told me that I shouldn't tell dirty stories to visiting royalties."

I have seen many royal weddings, but none so beautiful as that one, except in Imperial Russia. But then there is no setting in the world like Westminster Abbey. The stately pageantry of it all, the drive through the streets past those dense crowds of wildly cheering people, the dignity and beauty of the service will always remain in my memory.

Everything was perfectly organised down to the last detail. Many people have spent hours of anxious thought over the question of precedence in the drive to the Abbey. The Bride's Procession, the Bridegroom's Procession, the Procession of the King and Queen . . . all had to be arranged with the utmost exactitude.

Dear old Princess Victoria, grown querulous with emotion, discovered to her intense annoyance that she was to drive with some guests of whom she did not approve. Everyone was kept waiting to start while she explained to an agitated equerry that she would not get into the carriage with "those dreadful people."

Fortunately an old and privileged friend of the Royal Family was standing near and immediately came to the rescue. "Can't get into the carriage, Madam? Oh, yes, you can, let me help you . . ." And before she had time to utter another word, he scooped her deftly inside and shut the door on her indignant protests.

In front of the Abbey was a vast crowd of people who had waited there all through the night. To me there was something profoundly touching in their wonderful



SIGNED PHOTOGRAPH OF KING GEORGE VI, QUEEN ELIZABETH, PRINCESS MARGARET ROSE AND PRINCESS ELIZABETH, PRESENTED TO PRINCE CHRISTOPHER BY THEIR MAJESTIES

enthusiasm. Only in England now, I think, do you find this personal love of the Sovereign and his family, a sentiment that surpasses even fidelity; a perfect understanding that makes even the poorest subject feel that he has a right to share in the joys and sorrows of the Royal Family. Monarchy can never die out in England, whatever its fate in other countries. It is too deeply ingrained in the hearts of the people.

Watching those dense crowds I found myself remembering what King George had said so many years before: "It is one of the greatest responsibilities on earth to be the ruler of the British people. They trust one so implicitly."

How faithfully he kept that trust, the whole world knows. There was never a moment of the day when his thoughts were not for England.

On the evening before the wedding there was a dinner at Buckingham Palace, followed by a reception.

Every Royal House in Europe was represented. The King and Queen of Denmark, Prince Waldemar of Denmark, last surviving brother of Queen Alexandra and my father, who as the oldest member of the Danish family drove to the Abbey with King George and Queen Mary the next day; the King and Queen of Norway, the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess Cyril, Princess Juliana of the Netherlands. All the bridegroom's English relations, all the bride's Greek relations. All the Diplomatic Corps, all London society. The beautiful *salons*, the brilliant uniforms, the magnificent jewels of the women brought back memories of pre-War days, the splendid pageantry of royalty that exists only at the English Court now.

Marina glowing in white and the wonderful parure of sapphires and diamonds that the King had given her, went round with the Queen receiving everyone's con-

gratulations. Happiness had lent her an added beauty. Meeting Prince George's eyes she smiled radiantly.

But Queen Mary outshone every other woman there. Seeing her in her silver brocade dress with the broad ribbon of the Garter, magnificent diamonds blazing in her hair and on her neck and arms, was to understand the true meaning of the word regal. No woman has such graciousness, such perfect poise, such dignity. No one can wear jewels as she can. I think she could cover herself from head to foot with them and yet never look overladen as other women would do. On her they become only a part of her own personality, like the very distinctive style of dress she affects. Incidentally I have known few women with more "dress sense" than Queen Mary. Her taste is never at fault, but she is wise enough to know her own particular type and cling to it instead of following the dictates of fashion.

I met Princess Arthur of Connaught at the dinner and we sat together on a sofa at the reception afterwards and talked of the old days at Mar Lodge. It was the first time we had seen one another since the short-lived idyll of our engagement and we both burst into simultaneous laughter at the recollection of it.

I had just left her when I was stopped by the Prince of Wales. I had not seen David for some years, and I thought that he had changed a great deal. He looked older, of course, but happier and more self-assured. As we stood talking I saw that he was only giving me half his attention. His eyes were on a group of people by the door.

Suddenly he laid a hand on my arm in his impulsive way: "Christo, come with me. I want you to meet Mrs. Simpson . . ." "Mrs. Simpson, who is she?" I asked. "An American," then he smiled. "She's wonderful," he added. The two words told me everything. It was as though he had said: "She is the only woman in the world."

A moment later I was shaking hands with the lady whose destiny it has been to write a new page in the history of England. What is she like? I have to admit that I cannot describe her. On the surface she is just one of thousands of well-dressed, well-groomed, vivacious American women. You can see her type any day lunching at the Ritz in Paris or the Berkeley in London.

I remember that she was small and slight, that she talked incessantly and laughed a great deal, that she had a pleasing face rather than a pretty one. She is not a beauty in any sense of the word. But then was Cleopatra? Was Helen of Troy? We have only tradition to rely on in the case of either of them, and Mrs. Wallis Simpson will go down to tradition as the woman for whom the King of England renounced his throne, so probably future generations will endow her with beauty.

But what I do remember is that the Prince of Wales scarcely left her side all that evening, despite the fact that some of the most beautiful women in Europe were doing their utmost to attract his attention. He appeared never even to notice them. He was in love as it is given to men and women to love only once in a lifetime.

Looking back on that evening I can so well understand it all. Remembering David as I have known him since his childhood, I can almost say that what happened was inevitable. He is one of those predestined people, blessed or cursed by the gods with temperament, with imagination and an immense capacity for happiness or suffering.

As a child he was always different from the rest of the family; reserved, self-contained, ultra-sensitive. Even then he had a tremendous force of will; one could rule him by love, but never by fear. His grandfather, King Edward VII, understood him better than any one else.

Between the two was a bond of sympathy; they were alike in so many ways.

Once when we were sitting at luncheon at Buckingham Palace, David, who was then about ten years old, kept trying to attract the attention of his grandfather, who was in the middle of a story. At the first interruption the King frowned; at the second he sternly bade him be silent. A few minutes later, having come to the end of his story, he turned to him with a smile: "Well, my boy, what was it you wanted to say?"

"It doesn't matter now, Grandfather," said the clear, childish voice, "I was only going to tell you that there was a slug in your salad and now you've eaten it. . . ."

David was devoted to his grandfather but, unlike the other children, he had no awe of him. I remember another day at luncheon when he exasperated him by fidgeting until he knocked something off the table. The King's temper flashed out: "Damn you, boy . . ." he roared and, taking up a huge melon he hurled it smashing to the floor. David surveyed the debris in silence and then turned to his grandfather with an irresistibly funny expression of polite enquiry. Then the two burst out laughing.

The years passed and I did not see David until the summer of 1914, and in the meantime he had grown up. He was small and slight, looking much younger than he actually was; gay, irresponsible, with King Edward's great personal charm.

"David ought to marry," said Queen Alexandra. "It is his duty to do so," and she did her utmost to engage him to a charming young princess, but he refused even to consider the question. "But it is a most suitable marriage in every way," urged his grandmother; "and, what is more, you have often admired her. What possible objection can you have?"

"Only that," he said quietly, "I will never under any circumstances marry any woman unless I love her."

When I next saw him he had come back from the War, outwardly the same, yet in reality a different man. He belongs to the generation that has bought its knowledge of life at first hand, paid for it in suffering and unforgettable horror. Impossible to expect a prince who had served side by side with his men in the trenches, shared their privations and faced death with them, to cling tenaciously to the etiquette of Courts, to get any satisfaction out of his royal heritage. The War had left too indelible an imprint on a nature as sensitive as his.

I remember his coming back from one of his visits to the unemployed. I think it was in the North of England. He looked tired and depressed.

"I can't get those poor fellows out of my mind," he said. "It's terrible to see the despair in their eyes. I can imagine what I would feel in their place. So many of them have been through the War. What have they come back to? How can one tell them to go on hoping?"

He worried over them. It was not only a prince concerning himself for the people whom he would one day rule, but a man who had faced realities trying to find a solution to a problem he felt as keenly as though it were one of his own.

No man has ever enjoyed the prospect of reigning less than he, no king has ever hated pomp and circumstance more. He has been called a democrat; he was more than that. The principles of Socialism were his, not the Socialism founded on envy, but in its highest sense, built on love of humanity and understanding. Class distinctions simply do not exist for him. He has an almost devastating sincerity. His tragedy was, I think, that he was born a century too soon.

Time went by; he was verging on forty. He had met every eligible princess in Europe. Rumour coupled

his name first with one and then another, but without foundation. People had come to regard him as a confirmed bachelor when Mrs. Wallis Simpson came into his life. They met quite casually at a party in London, but in that moment the threads of two destinies were knit together. He knew hundreds of women more beautiful, many more suited to the position of his wife, but these considerations had no weight with him. She was to him simply the woman he loved. There were no half-measures in emotion possible to him. It had to be everything or nothing.

And so the rest of the story is known to the whole world. . . .

CHAPTER XI

KING ALEXANDER'S DEATH—FIRST RETURN TO GREECE—SECOND REVOLUTION—EXILED AGAIN—A STRANGE PREMONITION

AFTER the death of King Alexander the Throne of Greece was vacant once more. Again the Government took the unconstitutional step of setting aside the rightful heir and offered the crown to Prince Paul, the third son of King Constantine. He refused it, saying that his father and eldest brother had not yet renounced their rights.

Meanwhile my mother, who had arrived in Greece just after King Alexander died, was still in Athens and, despite the time of mourning, having an enthusiastic reception from the people.

Venizelos had for once lacked his habitual shrewdness. Poor Queen Sophie's heart-broken plea to go to the death-bed of her son had been peremptorily refused, but no obstacles had been put in the way of Queen Olga's return. Probably he thought that the Queen Dowager, driven on by no personal ambition, could hardly be regarded as a source of danger. He had not reckoned on her tremendous popularity. For over fifty years Greece had been her country. She had taken no part in its political affairs, but in a hundred quiet ways she had shown her love for it, her understanding of its people, and in return they loved her. Long ago they had taken her to their hearts, the shy little Queen who had come among them with her dolls, and through the years she had never lost her hold on them. Now

that she had come among them again they could not do enough to show their affection. Almost imperceptibly the wind changed.

Venizelos awaited confidently the day of the General Election, November 14, 1920. To his amazement the people rejected him and chose Mr. Ralli as Prime Minister.

The first act of the new Prime Minister, backed by the entire Cabinet, was to offer my mother the Regency of Greece. The gallant old gentleman went out to Tatoi to make the proposal to her. Tears of joy choked his voice, so that he could scarcely speak as he bent his stiff old knees to kneel before her. " Of course I accept it, but get up, my friend," she said, taking his hand and trying to make him rise, but he would not, so she too knelt down beside him. The equerry coming in found them both in floods of tears, struggling to help one another up from the floor.

By now the whole country was clamouring for the return of King Constantine to the Throne, but he felt that for the sake of the future he wanted the certainty of statistics. He asked that a plebiscite should be taken for or against his re-accession. In the meantime my mother telegraphed to the rest of the family to return to Athens immediately.

My brother Andrew, my sister Mary and I were the first to arrive. We took an Italian boat from Brindisi and in the early dawn arrived at the entrance to the Corinth Canal.

We were awakened by a volley of guns and hurried out on deck to find that the *Hawk*, a torpedo-boat commanded by Admiral Joannides (whom my sister afterwards married), had come out to meet us. We boarded it to the accompaniment of bursts of cheering from the sailors, who shed tears of joy unashamedly, and so did we.

I shall never forget the warmth of that welcome. All

Corinth had turned out with flags, flowers and photographs of the King. The people ran along the side of the Canal and lined the bridge, waving to us and pelting us with flowers. When we got to the Piræus we found the harbour filled with steamers overflowing with cheering people and so thick with craft of every description we could have walked across on them. Church bells rang, factory whistles screeched, everyone shouted themselves hoarse.

In the midst of the excitement we saw a launch flying the Royal Standard coming towards us. It was my mother come as Regent to welcome us. We boarded it and drew up to the landing-stage.

A motor was waiting for us only forty yards away, but it was three-quarters of an hour before we managed to get to it. Hundreds of people wanted to shake our hands and kiss us. They surrounded us, laughing, crying and talking all at once. We had to form a guard around my mother to prevent her being crushed to death out of affection. When we finally got to the car it was of little use to us or anyone else, for the crowd tore off the mudguards and running-boards in their efforts to get closer to us and even the clutch was put out of action.

Eventually an Army car came to our rescue, and in this we crawled inch by inch along a side-street. Looking back we saw the broad avenue from the sea black with cars driven four abreast. When we entered Athens the excitement reached frenzy. Men and women threw themselves flat in the road so that our car had to stop. . . . "Get out," called the crowd; "get out, we want to carry you."

My mother protested, but already eager hands were tearing open the doors of the car. "It's no use. We'll have to make the sacrifice," I said to my brother, "otherwise there's no knowing what will happen."

We got out of the car, but never set foot on the

ground. The four miles up to the Palace was covered on the shoulders of different people who, in their excitement, apparently forgot that they were not carrying lay figures. Everyone wanted to have a hand, or a shoulder rather, in the business of our transport, and we were jostled and tossed about from one relay of bearers to another until we were black and blue. I was so stiff I could scarcely walk for a week afterwards.

A good-looking woman in a mauve tailored suit grabbed one of my legs and started off independently of the stalwart mechanics in working overalls who just then had possession of the rest of me. "For Heaven's sake bring it back," I screamed over the general hubbub, and she relinquished it reluctantly to a youth with a shock of fanatical hair. I shot a glance of anguish over at my brother Andrew, but he did not even see it; he was too busy defending his garters from admirers who wanted them as souvenirs.

At the end of an hour and a half, just when I was beginning to feel that I should probably enliven the proceedings by being seasick (being carried on six or seven shoulders of varying height has rather the effect of riding a camel), we arrived at the Palace. Here my bearers left me, with the exception of the fanatical youth, who seemed possessed of the strength of Hercules, for, disregarding my protests, he staggered in with my not inconsiderable weight on his back. In the hall was Mr. Ralli, the elderly Prime Minister, who, seeing my furious struggles and scandalised at so undignified an entry, rushed forward to my assistance. "Let His Royal Highness get down at once!" he ordered, but my bearer took no notice and was making for the stairs when the Prime Minister grabbed his stick and rushed into the fray. The fanatical one released me to defend himself and sent poor old Mr. Ralli flying into a corner. By that time two soldiers had come to the rescue and I fled upstairs.

The first thought of all of us was to go to Tatoi, where my mother was living. But we had to wait until night, for the crowds around the Palace were so dense we could not get through them.

When it was dark we stole out like conspirators and drove along the familiar road. Each little village we passed through was illuminated and we were recognised and given a welcome whose warmth brought the tears to our eyes again. Everywhere there were signs of rejoicing. We drove under triumphal arches of flowers, flags fluttered in the breeze and King Constantine's photos, taken from drawers where they had lain hidden since the Venizelist regime, were proudly displayed in cottage windows. The cars could only crawl along, for at every few yards people would jump on the running-boards to shake our hands and thrust their simple presents upon us, until flowers, fruit and vegetables and game were piled up around our feet. And all the while the bells kept up their glad peal and the cry : " Erchetai . . . Erchetai " (He is coming) was taken up by hundreds of voices like a refrain.

I looked up at the velvet sky, studded with stars, the mountains outlined in their splendour, the dark pine forest ahead of us. This was Greece ! We were home again. The long years of exile were already far behind, dispelled like a dream in the morning.

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The plebiscite King Constantine had demanded resulted in an overwhelming majority for him. Out of a million votes only ten thousand were against his return.

Venizelos beheld the collapse of his myth. The result of the polling had given the lie direct to his elaborate propaganda service which had been endeavouring to prove that King Constantine was a tyrant, hated by his subjects, who had thankfully shaken off his yoke.

He did not stay to see the return of the King he had wronged. He departed the country with all possible speed, not even waiting to complete the formalities customary to a change of government.

The scenes on the arrival of King Constantine were even more enthusiastic than those that had welcomed us. The warship *Averoff* was sent to Venice to bring him and his family back to Corinth, from where they took the train to Athens. Thousands of people were at the station; they cheered frenziedly as the train steamed slowly in and clambered on to the flower-decked carriages.

The King was driven first to the Cathedral where an official *Te Deum* was sung and thanksgiving prayers were offered by the Archbishop, and then through the city to the Palace, where my mother waited to receive him.

The only cloud that marred our happiness was the memory of Alexander, who had lived and died so sadly, a sacrifice to the schemes of others. I looked at his mother's grief-stricken face, smiling bravely at the cheering crowds, and knew that her heart bled in secret.

In less than five years after King Constantine's joyous return to Athens the storm broke over Greece again.

The King had come back to a country in the throes of still another war, an insane war with nothing to justify it except the swollen head of Venizelos, who had followed out his usual policy of gambling, with the Greek nation as the stake. In one careless gesture of risk-all-to-gain-all, he had flung his armies into the field without either funds or material support behind them and with only vague promises of help from the Allies to rely on.

The Asia Minor campaign could only have had one end and King Constantine, practiced soldier and far-sighted general, said so from the beginning, but he took over the reins of government too late to prevent it.

The Greek force was already walking straight into the wasps' nest prepared by that military genius, Mustapha Kemal. The crushing defeat of Smyrna, followed by the appalling fire which destroyed the entire city and killed thousands of helpless people, aroused a torrent of indignation in Greece. A scapegoat had to be found and the most convenient scapegoat was the King. People began to remember all the Venizelist propaganda against him, raked together the still smouldering ashes of the past. Queen Sophie was the ex-Kaiser's sister, they reminded one another, though what bearing that could have on the present situation no one exactly knew. A wind charged with portents of revolution and bloodshed swept over the country.

There was only one thing to be done. The King abdicated in favour of his eldest son George. A few days later he left the country for ever.

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My wife and I were in Paris during those last tragic weeks of King Constantine's reign. She, with her usual shrewdness, had foreseen how it would end and, immediately after the abdication, she urged me to go back to Athens, get possession of all my stocks and bonds there and take them out of the country. "It will only be a question of time now before George is turned out too, and then everything will be taken from you," she insisted.

So I went back to Athens, taking with me only my English valet.

I had proof of the changed conditions even before I left Paris, for when I sent my passport to the Greek Minister to be *visaed*, I was given permission to remain in Greece only eight days. I decided to go first to Corfu to stay with my brother Andrew and his wife, who were living at Mon Repos, our old home there. I was amazed to find the house under the surveillance of police, who had orders to report on every visitor.

My sister-in-law greeted me with the news that Andrew had gone to Athens, having been summoned to give evidence in the trial of the Ministers who were accused of having instigated the Asia Minor campaign. This sounded normal enough, but I could see that she was very uneasy and sensed the coming storm just as I did. I left her, promising to get what news I could and write to her immediately I arrived.

In Athens the tension in the atmosphere was even more apparent. The people in the streets looked careworn and apprehensive or sullenly indifferent. However, rather to my surprise, I was received with royal honours; a launch came off to meet me in the Piræus and a car waited at the landing-stage.

I went straight to the King at Tatoi. There I found my worst misgivings justified. He was practically a prisoner, as his father had once been, but with this difference, that whereas the hostility against King Constantine had been created outside the country and fostered by the Allies while the Greeks remained loyal to a man, King George was facing a revolt of his own subjects. He looked worn out and told me that he had not slept for many nights.

The news he had to give me of Andrew was black indeed. He had been brought to Athens upon a false pretext and had been arrested immediately on his arrival. He was now in solitary confinement in the house of a friend, ex-A.D.C. of my brother Nicholas, awaiting trial.

The week that followed was a nightmare. Athens was seething with unrest. King Constantine's Ministers had been seized and flung into prison by the order of Venizelos, who was controlling the country from outside; every day there were new arrests.

No one was allowed to go near Andrew except his valet; even the dentist was not given permission to visit him when he broke a tooth and suffered great pain.

It was impossible to communicate with him for his guards kept the strictest watch and confiscated all letters and parcels that came to the house. Even food sent in by sympathisers was closely examined and a *foie gras* in aspic, with which a dear old lady intended to console him, was hacked to pieces before he was allowed to eat it.

Finally I hit on the happy expedient of writing a letter on cigarette-paper, rolling it tightly and putting it with other cigarettes into his valet's case. In this way it reached him safely. He answered it with a short note full of courage, but reading between the lines I knew that he had no longer any hope of regaining his freedom. He had just had a conversation with his former school friend, M. Pangalos, now Minister of War and instigator of his trial, that had left him small grounds for optimism.

"How many children have you?" Pangalos had asked suddenly and, when my brother, surprised at the irrelevance of the question, told him he shook his head: "Poor things, what a pity they will soon be orphans! . . ."

The days dragged by in an agony of suspense. The King was powerless to intervene, his own fate hung by a thread. He had less liberty than the poorest of his subjects, spies surrounded him night and day, reported all his movements. Every one who visited him fell under suspicion; he was afraid to be seen in the company of any member of his own family. He could not even drive from Tatoi to Athens with me, but went alone in an inconspicuous car from which the royal pennant had been removed, driven by a chauffeur without uniform.

Meanwhile the rest of our family, outside Greece, were moving heaven and earth to save Andrew. My mother appealed to King George V of England, the King of Spain and M. Poincaré, all of whom promised to do all they could. My wife succeeded in interesting the Pope in the question. The result was a concerted protest from all these different quarters, which even

Venizelos could scarcely ignore. Guessing what would happen, he speeded up the farce of the Ministers' trial with an almost indecent celerity. "Whatever you have to do, do it quickly," he telegraphed to his subordinates, "to-morrow may be too late."

So the seven unfortunate men were hauled out into the prison courtyard, without being given even half an hour to prepare themselves, lined up against the wall and shot. A few hours later Mr. Talbot, the emissary of the King of England, arrived in Athens and the King of Spain's A.D.C. and the Papal Legate followed him.

I fully expected to be arrested any day during that week in Athens and I owed my escape solely to the fact that my wife had given me a very substantial cheque to present to the Red Cross there. It had a magic effect when I waved it in the eyes of various officials. I had also two good friends on whose loyalty I could count: Mr. Stucker, my former tutor, and Mr. Carolou, my lawyer, whose wife was my first governess and became afterwards my mother's secretary and lady-in-waiting. With their help I managed to collect all my securities and even all the jewels belonging to my brother Nicholas's wife, which I had promised to bring out of Greece with me.

Several days before I left an acquaintance came to warn me that he had heard I was to be arrested. "For Heaven's sake take the next train and clear out before it is too late," he advised me. "If you don't you will find yourself in prison." But I told him I intended to leave by boat as I was going to join King Constantine at Palermo and would have to wait for the next Italian steamer to call. He shrugged his shoulders: "If you wait until then you will be stopped as you go on board." However I had a *visa* for a week and saw no reason why I should be terrorised into going before it expired.

My departure was in striking contrast to my arrival. This time there were no royal honours for me, no





(*Above*) KING GEORGE II OF GREECE, PRINCESS HELEN OF ROUMANIA AND KING ALEXANDER, WHEN YOUNG. (*Below*) PRINCESSES MARINA, ELIZABETH AND OLGA, NOW THE DUCHESS OF KENT, COUNTESS TOERRING AND PRINCESS PAUL OF YUGOSLAVIA RESPECTIVELY

attentive officials and waiting launch. My manner of leaving was more expeditious than dignified.

On the sailing day I drove down to the harbour with Mr. Stucker and my lawyer in a plain car. There we transferred ourselves as speedily and unostentatiously as possible into a little rowing-boat. This operation was impeded by the quantity of our baggage, which included two large suitcases stuffed with all my own and my brother Nicholas's money and securities, a wooden box filled with my sister-in-law's jewellery—a cause of much apprehension to me, for its bottom was all but falling out—and I had visions of shedding tiaras and ropes of pearls along the quay, and a basket containing her cherished white Persian cat.

It was a nerve-racking moment for, until we got clear of the landing-stage, I fully expected some of the harbour officials would recognise us and detain me, but fortunately their attention was concentrated on the public launch which was just then disembarking passengers from the steamer and our little craft passed unnoticed.

But the cat was nearly our undoing for, warned perhaps by some instinct that it was no longer on terra firma, it started to yowl dismally just as we were preparing to seat ourselves in the boat. I looked around hastily and to my horror saw glances of interest turned in our direction. In another moment the game would be up, I thought. I thumped the basket viciously, but it only made things worse for the piercing wails grew still louder.

"For God's sake get it," I hissed to Mr. Stucker, but he was engaged in a grim struggle with one of the suitcases which had chosen that inappropriate moment to burst open and strew parts of its contents on the quay. I saw him out of the tail of my eye hastily stuffing back packets of money and stocks, while I tried to quiet the cat.

But at length we got off and rowed out to the Italian steamer. There we discovered that, far from having

got to the end of our adventures, the worst had still to be faced. At the top of the gangway stood a Greek sentry with orders to examine every passport. My heart sank when I saw him for I remembered my acquaintance's warning. They were going to detain me at the last moment, then! I made up my mind to take a sporting chance, anyway. So I ran full speed up the gangway, and instead of stopping when the sentry barred my way I dealt him a tremendous blow in the stomach that doubled him up. Then, before he could recover himself, I sprang past him and rushed into my cabin. Once there I was safe, for I was on Italian ground and he had no power to arrest me. So petrified was he at the turn of events that he let Mr. Stucker bring all the luggage on board without even examining his passport!

The boat called at Corfu, but I was not allowed to land, so poor Princess Alice, who by this time was nearly demented with anxiety, came on board for news of her husband. It went to my heart that I had no comfort to give her, for Andrew's plight could hardly have been worse. She read the truth in my face, but she was a brave woman and would not lose hope. Ignoring her own danger she went straight to Athens and remained with her husband all through his trial.

Meanwhile I landed in Brindisi, stayed the night at the hotel there and went on to Palermo the next day. If the journey lacked excitement it was certainly not the fault of the cat, for it did its best to enliven things for me and my fellow-passengers.

It began by escaping from its basket in the hotel a quarter of an hour before my train was due to start and playfully leading a game of hide-and-seek with me and the entire hotel staff in hot pursuit, up and down stairs and through a labyrinth of corridors. Finally it took refuge in the bedroom of an elderly English spinster who had a nervous horror of cats and screamed

shrilly until it had been forcibly dragged out from beneath her bed by a waiter. After it had been restored to its basket and the lid clamped down I made a dash for the station and hurled myself into the train with one minute to spare.

There was no sleeping car on the express, but Stucker and I had a compartment to ourselves and, after our various impedimenta had been arranged around us, we settled down. But not to sleep! All the way from Brindisi to Palermo my mind could hold only two preoccupations—the cat and Helen's box of jewels. The cat in its solitary confinement yelled so heartrendingly that people passing along the corridor cast glances of pity and indignation in our direction. On the other hand I dared not let it loose, remembering its previous dash for freedom. Every few hours, in obedience to my sister-in-law's careful injunctions, I exercised it on the platform, with a stout lead attached to its collar, but these precautions were not attended with any success. Their only effect was to make the unfortunate animal still more nervous and I was more than glad to get both it and Princess Helen's bursting box of jewels, which I dared not let out of my hands, safely back into the compartment.

Finally the cat outwitted me and got under the seat of the carriage, whence it refused to move until it was dragged out backwards covered from ears to tail with soot, at the end of the journey. Princess Helen gave a scream when she saw it: "Christo, what have you done to the poor thing?" she cried indignantly. "What has it not done to me!" I retorted with feeling: "That's not an ordinary cat. I believe it's a devil."

It certainly tried to confirm my theory, for its first act on arriving at the Hotel Villa Igea, where King Constantine and several members of the family were staying, was to engage Queen Sophie's old mongrel cat, which until then had been in possession of the field, in deadly

combat. I was having my bath when I heard a pandemonium of snarls, shrieks and hisses on the terrace and, on looking out of the window, saw two infuriated balls, one a dirty white, the other grey, whirling in the midst of a cloud of dust and flying fur. My brother Nicholas was running around them, trying to separate them with a tiny jug of water taken from his breakfast-tray, and a nun from the Convent of Blue Sisters, with veil and robes flying, was rushing into the fray with a sunshade which she had snatched up from a chair. Finally my brother, with a well-directed kick, sent them hurtling through the air, one into a rose bush, the other into an orange tree, where they stayed for hours licking their wounds. Apparently honour was satisfied with first blood, for, during the rest of the time, they made no attempt to repeat the battle and regarded one another with lofty indifference.

I stayed ten days in the peace and sunshine of Palermo. The Italians were kindness itself to us, did everything to mitigate the sense that we were exiles. It was very different from those miserable years in Switzerland with the whole of Europe against us, and the younger members of the family were happy enough.

I was shocked at the change in King Constantine. He seemed to have aged many years in the last few months. He had not lost his sense of humour, laughed and took part in everything going on around him, yet he was like a ghost among the living. His heart was broken.

When I left by boat he came down to the landing-stage with me. I looked back and saw the tall, soldierly figure standing there in the light of the setting sun, waving to me, and suddenly a mist rose in front of my eyes, for I had a strange premonition that I would never see my brother again.

I went straight to Paris where I found my mother and my sister Minnie worn with anxiety over Andrew, whose

so-called trial was just drawing to its conclusion. Day after day we waited for news in an agony of suspense. Reporters besieged us every hour, clamouring for interviews. They even tried to force their way into our suite at the Ritz and I was driven into hiding every time the door opened. Then I changed my tactics; told them they would probably get the news before I did and asked them to let me know when they heard anything.

The trial ended on a Saturday. All the night we sat up waiting for the news of the verdict, but none came. The next morning my mother, wan and haggard, went to the Russian church to pray.

At ten o'clock the telephone rang. My hands shook so that I could hardly lift the receiver. It was a reporter, a *New York Herald* man. "Your brother is to be exiled, not shot," he told me.

My sister and I drove at top speed to the church. My mother was just coming out. The colour drained from her face when she saw us and her hand flew to her heart: "He's safe, he's safe. It's all right," we called.

She turned back towards the church, made the sign of the cross and burst into tears. . . .

CHAPTER XII

ROUMANIAN MARRIAGE—DIVORCE—SECOND ROUMANIAN MARRIAGE—SECOND DIVORCE!

WHILE we were in exile there began a romance that was destined to become one of the most tragic of this century. In 1920 my niece, Princess Helen of Greece, became engaged to Prince Carol of Roumania. Since then she has known suffering such as has fallen to the lot of few women. And the end of the chapter is not yet written.

The princess was beautiful then, perhaps the most beautiful princess in Europe; she is still beautiful, even after years of sorrow. There is in her a kind of joyous goodness, a gay and lovely vitality that charms everyone who comes in contact with her. Her father, King Constantine, adored her from babyhood and later, when she grew older, often took her with him on his visits to the provinces, with her English governess, Miss Nichols, as chaperone. Wherever they went the peasants were ready to worship her as she went about among them, talking to them like one of themselves, learning their customs, interesting herself in their lives. She had her father's love and understanding of Greece and its people.

When we all went into exile she adapted herself to the altered circumstances with the same sweetness and serenity; nothing could take from her that gift of joyous vitality that would not let her be sad.

Prince Carol went to visit her father in Switzerland, saw her for the first time and ended by falling in love with her. A few weeks later their engagement was

announced and they were married early in the following year.

One would have imagined that if ever a marriage was destined to be happy that one was, yet it failed disastrously.

Carol of Roumania has the charm that brilliant, temperamental Queen Marie has bequeathed to all her children, allied to a tremendous force of personality. Even in his boyhood he showed flashes of will that neither of his parents could cope with; staid Cabinet Ministers shook their heads gloomily over his youthful wild oats. Yet their misgivings were not justified, for as a sovereign he has been outstandingly successful, despite the fact that he ascended the Throne at a time of great difficulty. In these democratic days he is practically the only king who is both feared and respected in his country.

He is extremely intelligent and certainly the most scholarly monarch in Europe. There is scarcely a book of importance in any language that he has not read. He knows more about Italian art and Greek ruins than any guide book. No king ever worked harder or ruled more conscientiously. No husband ever treated his wife in a worse way.

The marriage that had begun so well was shipwrecked from the day Prince Carol met Mme Lupescu. It was one of those attachments that happen only once in a century. Those who believe in reincarnation explain them by the theory that every human soul has its complement, and that our loves go with us from one incarnation to the next, untrammelled by any difference in rank or circumstance. Maybe this is so; I for one can see no reason to doubt it.

Mme Lupescu is to the world in general only a little red-haired Jewess, not beautiful in any sense of the word, not even having any apparent attraction other than that of thousands of women of her type. She led a life more

or less of adventure in Bucarest until she met the Crown Prince, but from that moment her star was in the ascendant. She has kept King Carol's heart for many years now. For her sake he quarrelled bitterly with his father, renounced his right to the Throne and became a homeless exile.

In the early days of their love the Court imagined it would be a passing infatuation. The Crown Prince had fallen in love before, said the wise, and would probably do it again. They recalled his youthful escapades, his secret marriage with Mme Zizi Lambrino and how he had gone into exile with her. But he had soon tired of rebellion and come back to the fold again. The marriage had been annulled, his ex-wife had left the country with a large pension, and it had all been forgotten. Probably this affair, too, would die a natural death.

But time went by, and Mme Lupescu's influence instead of lessening grew stronger. Then Queen Alexandra died and the Crown Prince went to England to attend her funeral. It was remarked by many there that he wore a happy and excited demeanour hardly warranted by so sad an occasion, but the explanation was not forthcoming until it was found out that Mme Lupesco had slipped out of the country and met him in Italy.

King Ferdinand stormed, Queen Marie wept. There were agitated ministerial councils. Letters flew to and fro like birds, angry pens scratched, telephone wires hummed; but it was all to no purpose.

Finally, the King, backed by his Ministers, delivered an ultimatum: the Crown Prince must give up Mme Lupesco and return to Roumania or else renounce his right to the Throne. He never even hesitated, and complied.

So the lovers became outcasts, wandering around Europe. They went from Berlin to Paris, from Paris to London, a continual source of embarrassment to diplomats and anxiety to the police deputed to protect them.

Their lives were constantly threatened, they were perpetually short of money, but it made no difference. They were completely absorbed in one another.

Meanwhile, Princess Helen remained quietly in Bucarest with her little son, Prince Michael, now heir to the Throne, endearing herself to everyone. From the very beginning of the affair she had shown the greatest tact and understanding, and, despite the well-meant advice of friends and relations, her loyalty to her husband never wavered. Many times she pleaded his cause with King Ferdinand, who was devoted to her and had great faith in her judgment. Her restraint and fidelity won her the admiration of the whole country, and after a while she had an enormous following. She might, if she had stooped to intrigue against Prince Carol, have held all the cards, for, as time went by, he grew more and more unpopular, but she was too transparently honest even to think of it. She accepted the humiliation of his conduct towards her with courage and dignity, and tried to build her life around her son. The Ministers repeatedly urged her to divorce her husband, but she steadfastly refused to do so, both for the sake of her child and because she was convinced that he would one day return.

Overcoming her pride, she made many attempts at reconciliation, but Prince Carol would not even consider the question. Many times an arrangement was tried to get a meeting between them, but without success. Years passed and there seemed to be no solution to the problem. Princess Helen finally was prevailed upon, at the urgent representations of the Ministers, to divorce her husband.

Not long afterwards King Ferdinand died and the little Prince Michael was proclaimed King, with a regency composed of his uncle, Prince Nicholas, the Archbishop of Roumania and the Prime Minister. But the military party was strongly in favour of Prince Carol's return and its overtures to him culminated in the sensational coup by which he regained his crown. Showing the courage

and resolution which he has never lacked, he took an aeroplane and flew back to Roumania unarmed and with only a problematical number of supporters to receive him. Once there he placed himself at the head of the Army and wrested the Throne from his son.

Princess Helen's position in Bucarest, which had been difficult before, now became impossible. Although she was still ready to agree to a reconciliation for the sake of the kingdom and her son, King Carol would not consent to it. He went to see her at her house in Bucarest, greeted her like a casual acquaintance and told her his intentions. She might, if she wished, remain in Roumania, but she would be excluded from the Court. She would not be acknowledged as Queen, but she would be called "Her Majesty Helen." She refused to accept this concession and remained known as Princess Helen of Roumania. A few weeks later she left the country.

Ever since that day she has had to fight for her rights. How courageously she has done this, only those who know her intimately can tell. She has been absolutely blameless, yet her son was ruthlessly taken from her when he was a small child and kept from her ever since. He is growing up now, yet he scarcely knows his mother, for he is only allowed to spend two short months at separate periods in every year with her and even these are spoilt by the constant presence of the tutors appointed to keep him under supervision day and night.

A few years ago he was very ill and Princess Helen, frantic with anxiety, telegraphed to the King for permission to go to Bucarest. There was no answer, so she took matters into her own hands and slipped into the country. She got over the frontier, but she was made to leave the train at the stop before Bucarest and to enter a closed car which drove her into the city.

On her arrival she was told that the King had definitely refused permission for her to see her son, who was at Sinaia. In despair she went to her sister-in-law, Queen

Elizabeth of Greece, who was then living in Bucarest, and implored her help.

Queen Elizabeth, impetuous and warm-hearted, had always been her friend. Now she flung herself loyally into the fray and, after a stormy scene with her brother, succeeded in making him countermand his orders. Princess Helen was reluctantly allowed to spend a few days with her child and see him on the road to recovery before she was forced to leave the country once more. She left him in charge of the old English nurse who had been in her family for many years and had cared for her and her brothers and sisters all through their childhood.

The story of her return to Roumania had leaked out and at many a little station *en route* there were groups of people gathered there to cheer their beloved young princess, whose sorrows had only endeared her more to them. They waited at the frontier with flowers for her and wept as they bade her farewell.

That was some years ago, but the situation is still unchanged. King Carol has steadfastly refused to give up Mme Lupescu. Time and again he has come to a deadlock with his Ministers on her account. The entire country longs for a reconciliation between him and his wife, for Princess Helen's supporters are many, but reconcilation is impossible under the present state of affairs. There have been persistent outbreaks of hostility in Roumania against Mme Lupescu, demands for her to leave the country, but none of them have led to anything. Like King Carol, she treats her enemies with complete indifference. For years she has evinced a personal bravery worthy of his. She gets many letters threatening her life, she ignores them all. She knows that there are secret societies in Bucarest whose members have pledged themselves to kill her, yet she walks about in the streets alone.

It is told that not long ago a young officer succeeded

in gaining admittance to her house and, entering the room where she was sitting, drew out his revolver and took careful aim at her. But she only laughed contemptuously, crossed the room and calmly disarmed him.

Nor have less drastic measures to separate her from the King proved more successful. Pressure has been brought to bear on him by the members of his own family and from many other quarters, but in vain.

Meanwhile Princess Helen lives very quietly in Florence, deprived of the position that is hers by right. She is still young and beautiful, but her life is in ruins. And Roumania has lost a wonderful Queen.

I stayed in Bucarest in 1922, after the marriage of my niece. I believe that in the last few years the city has improved enormously, but at that time it struck me as being like a glorified Russian village. The main streets were fine, but the rest was a huddle of untidy houses and waste land. Even the palace was so antiquated and uncomfortable that it was used only for balls and State receptions, and King Ferdinand and Queen Marie lived in a house outside the town. This was an arrangement that entirely pleased the Queen, who always detested the old palace ever since she had been brought there as a bride. The cold rooms with their hideous furniture, which she was not allowed by her father-in-law to change, depressed her and in winter she sat and shivered from the draughts.

Queen Marie of Roumania has made glamorous appearances and disappearances in my life ever since I first met her in Russia in 1908. In those days she was so beautiful that she looked like a princess out of a fairy-tale. Actually she was—and still is—a princess living in a fairy-tale world of her own. It is this incapacity for adapting herself to realities that has been the source

of nearly all her unhappiness and certainly the reason why she is misjudged by so many people. As a woman, her life has been one series of conquests, for since she was seventeen nearly every man she has met has ended by falling in love with her. As a queen her path has not been so smooth.

She is extremely talented, paints remarkably well, is an authority on interior decoration and has a positive genius for gardening. She has many houses, built in all sorts of unexpected places and in each one of them she has created a garden that is a joy to walk in and to the eyes. Her originality manifests itself in her choice of homes, for they are always situated in the most remote and inaccessible spots. One of her favourite ones is Bran, a beautiful castle among the hills, perched right on the top of a rock, with a sheer drop of ninety feet below it. Then there was Balcik, where I often visited her, built in Tartar style, just at the very edge of the Black Sea. She herself designed its Turkish sloping roof and the minaret which, after its construction, caused intense consternation to the Moslem inhabitants of the country. This and the fact that she appeared among them in Turkish trousers sadly shocked their susceptibilities! They gossiped about her as people have always gossiped about her, whether they frequent courts or country market-places. No queen has ever been more uncharitably talked about or more misunderstood, or more admired and beloved. It is just her very graces, the fact that her heart is of gold that so often proves her undoing. Too good-natured to be critical, she falls into the hands of the wrong people and gets exploited by them.

Her tour of America with Louie Fuller caused a flood of scandal, though she embarked on it with the best intentions—to collect money for her country. That others might be inspired by other motives simply did not occur to her. She started off in good faith and flung herself into it, with all her usual zest for enjoyment that

makes life a joyous adventure to her. Everything went according to plan at the beginning, she made speeches in all the cities they visited, attended dinners and receptions in her honour and collected thousands of dollars. Then certain facts came to her knowledge and the result was a quarrel with the organisers, which ended in Louie Fuller leaving their special train somewhere on mid-route and returning to New York.

The American Press got hold of the story. Miss Fuller's name appeared in flaming headlines as: "The girl who walked back from a train ride," and the whole affair gave rise to a number of absolutely unfounded attacks on poor Queen Marie. She had to return to Roumania on account of the King's serious illness, which ended in death.

Queen Marie's daughter, Princess Elizabeth, who married my nephew, King George II of Greece, has inherited her mother's beauty and many of her talents. She does exquisite embroidery, paints in water-colours like a professional artist, sings charmingly and is one of the best cooks I have ever come across. When she and her husband lived in exile at their house in Bucarest, she used to concoct the most delicious dishes, very often of her own invention. But the marriage has not been a success and they are divorced now.

One of the most romantic marriages in the Greek Royal Family was made by the late King Alexander, who married—like all the rest of us—for love only. Perhaps the happiness he found with his Greek wife was some compensation for a life of disappointment and humiliation, but viewed from a political angle the marriage only caused more complications and new puzzles to be unravelled.

Mlle Mano was a commoner, the daughter of King Constantine's A.D.C. She was exquisitely beautiful, with a profile like one of the nymphs in a classical Greek frieze come to life. King Alexander had known her



THE DUKE OF WINDSOR

since they played together as children and, as the years passed, the friendship developed into love.

Late one night in November, 1919, a priest living in a humble quarter of Athens was roused by loud knocking at his front door. On going downstairs he found two men who told him that his services were urgently needed. They refused to give him any further particulars and practically forced him into a car which was waiting outside the door. In this he was driven to a private house, where he was conducted to a room in which several people were assembled. A few minutes later King Alexander and Mlle Mano entered and he was told that he had been sent for to perform their marriage ceremony.

There was consternation when the secret was discovered. In the first place the King had married without asking the consent either of his father or of the head of the Church and, apart from this, the marriage in itself was intensely unpopular in Greece. The populace was furious. Democratic and unconventional as the Greeks were, they were very proud of their kingdom. Years before they had brought my father over from Denmark to rule them because they would not choose a king from among themselves. They were equally determined now not to have the daughter of a commoner of their own race on the Throne. Feeling ran so high that Mlle Mano had to leave Athens.

Finally, after a great deal of debate, it was decided that the marriage was to be recognised as legal, but that the King's wife was not to be given the rank or any of the privileges of a queen. She was to be known simply as Madame Mano. The daughter who was born to her was, however, given the title of Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra of Greece.

After the death of King Alexander his widow felt the position keenly, but no attempt was made to alter her status. The Ministers would not even consider the question.

Some years afterwards, when King George II came to the Throne, I met Madame Mano in Sorrento and she begged me to do something for her, pointing out the humiliation of having a daughter who was a Royal Highness with a King for a father, while she herself had no title and not even a position in the eyes of the Court.

I could do nothing, but I went to Queen Sophie with Aspasie's tale of woe. My sister-in-law had never got over the shock of her son's death; she would not refuse an appeal on behalf of the woman who had made the last years of his life at least bearable. So I went to her and put the whole matter before her.

As I thought, she was at once sympathetic and ready to help, but uncertain as to how to do it.

"She could have the title of Princess Alexander," she decided at last, "but how in the world I am going to break it to the Court, I don't know. They will never accept it, I am afraid." "They will have to, if you make them," I answered.

So poor Queen Sophie, in fear and trembling, summoned all her resolution and made the announcement that henceforth her son's widow was to be known as Princess Alexander. As she had guessed, it was not received with enthusiasm and for some days after there were black looks whenever the subject was mentioned.

But when all is said and done, this is a day of democracy. Some time after that, I went to see a revue in Cannes and, to my amazement, discovered that one of the girls dancing in the chorus was described as "Mlle Mano—sister of the ex-Queen of Greece."

CHAPTER XIII

FIRST VISIT TO THE U.S.A.—DEATH OF KING CONSTANTINE—MY FIRST WIFE'S DEATH

COMING to America from Europe always seems to me like finding a fresh green bough in a bouquet of withering hot-house flowers. It is so full of sap, youth, vitality. It has the tonic effect of a cold douche on a hot day. Even the air is as invigorating as champagne. It is the only country I know of where you can burn the candle at both ends, go to bed at all hours of the night and wake up next morning as fresh as a daisy. But then I must confess to being a confirmed lover of America and Americans in general, and nothing pleases me more than to be mistaken for one. I like the sturdy independence of the other side of the Atlantic, its freedom from humbug. Even its crudities, for they come from too much zest for living, and that surely is a fault in the right direction in a world that tends to become more effete and more desiccated as it grows older.

I went to the United States for the first time in the winter of 1922, a few weeks after my brother Andrew's banishment from Greece. My wife and I stayed in Paris during that autumn for the wedding of my wife's son, William B. Leeds, Jr., and my niece Xenia, the daughter of my sister Marie. We had all done our utmost to persuade them to postpone it until they were older, but they would not even listen to us.

They had played together as children in the days when Mrs. Leeds lived at Kenwood and had asked my sister

to stay with her and bring her two daughters. Then William Leeds was sent to school in Switzerland and their paths divided until the autumn of 1921 when my wife was taken ill and had to undergo a very serious operation in Athens.

Her son was sent for and came over from America. He stayed with us in my brother Nicholas's house and renewed his friendship with his former playmate. None of their unsuspecting elders realised what was happening, until one moonlight night when William borrowed my car to go for a drive. Now young men do not usually go for drives in the moonlight alone, but I was vaguely perturbed when I heard he had taken Xenia with him.

I went on to a poker party. At about 1 a.m. our game was disturbed by loud knocking at the front door and presently a footman entered with the message that a lady and gentleman who would not give their names wanted to see me. I guessed it was William and Xenia, and my first thought was that they had probably smashed up the car, and had come to break the news gently to me. But on going out to the front door I found them both sitting in it with beaming faces. . . . "We're engaged, and we want you to be the first to congratulate us."

Consternation reigned in both families. William had reached the ripe age of eighteen, Xenia was two years younger. We all assured them separately, and in concert, that they were far too young even to think of marriage. They only swept aside our objections, and finally threatened to elope and dispense with the marriage ceremony.

The two mothers, my wife and my sister Marie, were the first to weaken. "If that's how they feel about it, what's the use of our opposing them?" they said philosophically. "They are such infants and probably it won't last. But all the same we have got to let them try it, or they will always blame us for spoiling their lives."

The result was that one October morning we all accompanied the infants, first to the American church, and then to the Russian, and saw them made man and wife.

In December my wife and I and Lady Sarah Wilson sailed for New York. The crossing was so rough that it passed in a vista of wave-washed decks and sea-sick passengers without leaving any coherent impression, until suddenly we found ourselves in harbour and our state-room in possession of a horde of about fifty reporters. Never in my life had I been asked so many questions, however, I answered them as best I could and eventually we got on shore and through the Customs.

But even then we were not clear of the reporters, for two of them followed us to our hotel and came up to the sitting-room with us. It was in the days of Prohibition and I scored a distinct triumph when I produced my silver flask of whisky, which I had taken care to fill before we left the boat. By the time the three of us had emptied it we were firm friends and are to this day. Incidentally, although I have heard so much of the iniquities of the American press, I have never experienced anything but kindness from it. I have always found reporters the friendliest and the most human of people, and they have done me many a good turn.

We landed in New York on December 23rd and went on the next day to stay with my wife's sister, Mrs. Henderson Green, who had a delightful colonial house in New Jersey. My first American Christmas was a real old-fashioned one, such as I had thought existed only in the pages of Dickens, with snow frosting the trees in the park, a Yule log and a giant Christmas tree laden with presents for everyone.

New York, too, lay inches deep under snow when we got back and the cold reminded me of winters in Russia. It had been freezing hard and the pavement in front of the Ambassadors Hotel where we were staying was like

glass when I set out on my first tour of inspection of the city. Ignoring the door-keeper's warning to "walk carefully," I started off gaily enough and successfully negotiated the slippery steps of the hotel. But a few yards farther on I put my heel on a small treacherous lump of ice and forthwith began turning cartwheels in the air. Then, instead of the expected crash, two strong hands grasped me firmly beneath the shoulders and a rich Irish brogue proclaimed in my ear: "Hold up will ye now while I set ye on yer feet." And a second later I stood upright, looking into the merry blue eyes of a policeman, a great blond giant of a man, six foot four at least. I thanked him for his timely assistance and after we had chatted for a few minutes went on my way.

He was still at his post when I came back an hour later and saluted me in friendly recognition. Then he, too, set his heel on that same piece of ice, struggled valiantly to keep his balance and began making weird evolutions through the air as I had done. It was my turn to fly to the rescue now, but alas! I was neither as tall nor as strong as he, and his superior weight bore me to the ground with him, to the delight of the spectators. We both got up rather ruefully, dusted our clothes clear of snow and thereafter became firm friends. Never a morning went by without at least one chat. He used to watch me go in and out of my favourite speak-easy, which was just opposite, without turning a hair. Once, seeing me returning from it with a parcel whose wrapping only faintly disguised the outline of two bottles of whisky, he winked broadly: "Now mind ye, I don't know what ye've got in that parcel, but I'm hoping ye'll drink me health in it to-night!"

I grew quite accustomed to slinking down area steps and into cellars for my drinks, giving the prescribed number of knocks at closed doors and signing assumed names in the registers of the most popular speak-easies. But although it was an adventure to get it, there was no

shortage of drink, at least as far as we were concerned, for kind friends, proud of their acquaintance with the most successful bootleggers, plied us with wine and spirits of every description. I went to more cocktail parties than I had ever attended in Europe, the only difference being that the host took care to assure us that his drinks had all been analysed. I used to wonder at this precaution until at one party I drank a synthetic cocktail and felt nearer death than ever I was before or since.

Most of our two months' stay in the United States that winter was passed in one long round of lunches, dinners and dances, at all of which I met different people, who clearly expected me to be more or less on show. I got quite accustomed to being regarded rather in the light of a wild animal my wife had taken alive and put in captivity. I even grew to anticipate the sort of questions that were invariably put to me.

It amused my wife to watch my reactions to it all, for although she had lived so much in Europe she adored her country and took such pride in showing it to me. She had talked of her American friends so often that I felt I knew most of them long before we met and they all welcomed me with open arms for her sake. No woman was more universally beloved than she.

Within a week after my arrival all the colony of Greek Royalists rallied round me. I had forgotten that New York is the biggest capital of every country in the world, and I was amazed, not only at the numbers of my compatriots, but at finding them split into factions, just as much as in Athens. If I had thought to get away from Greek politics by leaving Greece I was mistaken. There was a Royalist press and a Venizelist press, each steeping their pens in bitter controversy and the first thing I did was to offend both. Even now I record the story with apologies.

It arose out of my first interview with the newspaper

men. One reporter on the staff of a Society paper, who had been firing off question after question at me, asked me how I happened to be so fair. "You look absolutely Nordic," he insisted, "not in the least Greek." Tired of explaining that my father had come from Denmark, I thought I would vary the answer this time. "What did you expect me to look like? A little black worm?" I asked.

Next day my unfortunate remark, which I had meant as a joke and never intended to be taken seriously, appeared in print with a headline all to itself and not unnaturally caused a good deal of ill-feeling among the Greeks in New York. What was more, it was caught up and improved on by every Venizelist paper in Greece, with venomous comments on this proof of how the Royal Family had regarded its subjects.

Some of the first people I met were William Randolph Hearst and his wife, who came to lunch with us at the Ambassadors Hotel. I remember thinking him at first rather dull and ordinary enough, except for his piercing blue eyes and the curious effect of his high-pitched voice, coming out of so enormous a frame. But suddenly half-way through lunch he began to talk about Greece, which evidently interested him and then I realised not only his extraordinary grasp of European politics, but his great personal magnetism.

Hearst held the view, which at that time was almost unique, though it has since been universally accepted, that Greece had been the victim of the Allies' blundering Secret Service, and that King Constantine had been ruthlessly sacrificed to the schemes of Venizelos and his cronies in French diplomacy. Coming as I had done from Europe, where my family was still regarded with distinct coldness in many quarters, it was refreshing to find someone capable of seeing both sides of the picture, and we have been friends ever since. I have enjoyed many dinners in their beautiful mediæval house.

Some of the American homes I visited were a revelation to me. Not even in the Imperial palaces of Russia have I seen finer collections of old pictures, tapestries and antique furniture.

George Blumenthal's house in New York struck me as fantastic, like a museum, with its wonderful collection of ecclesiastical art treasures which he has amassed from all parts of the world. Everywhere one looked there were rare holy pictures, many of them from famous Italian galleries, beautiful statues of the Virgin and saints, exquisite crucifixes and enamels. The enormous hall in which he received us had originally been the courtyard of an old monastery in Spain, which he had transplanted; its roof had adorned a Spanish palace in the days of Ferdinand and Isabella.

In front of the Madonnas burnt candles which were specially painted in designs copied from the old missals, the air was faintly perfumed with incense. The only modern touch was the rose water that played from a fountain in the centre of the hall.

From there we passed from one *salon* after another, each containing treasures more precious than the last, until we came to the dining-room. This too had a façade which had been transplanted, this time from a Normandy cottage. On its balcony stood a huge, sombre antique crucifix, from which the face of the dying Christ gazed sadly down on the feasting below.

We had been in New York only a few weeks when I received a cable telling me that my brother King Constantine had died very suddenly in Palermo.

The Italians, who had been so hospitable to him in his lifetime, saw to it that his last journey was worthy of a king. The Duchesse d'Aosta and her son, the Duc d'Apuglia, went immediately to the widowed Queen Sophie and, with the greatest kindness and sympathy, took charge of everything. The coffin was taken first to Naples where a funeral service was held before it was

transferred to its resting-place in the crypt of the Russian Church in Florence.

King Constantine passed through Naples on a gun-carriage, along streets lined with troops, as he would have wished. They were not his own troops, his men who had followed him to victory in the Balkan wars, but in death there is no race, only " the glorious company of the brave," and so the soldier king who had died in exile was honoured by the soldiers of the country that had sheltered him.

My brother Andrew and his wife were actually on their way out to join us in the United States when they heard over the ship's wireless the news of King Constantine's death. It cast a shadow over the pleasure of our meeting.

The diverse Greek factions in New York received the tidings with mingled feelings. The Venizelist press was for once silent. The Royalists openly mourned the King and attended memorial services for him. All the love that had once burned in the hearts of his subjects seemed to have rekindled with his death, and we had many touching manifestations of sympathy.

We were even asked to go to Montreal to attend a memorial service held by the Greek colony there, and one bitterly cold morning in February my brother Andrew and his wife, and I and Mr. Stucker, took the train and departed for Canada. My wife, who had not been well, remained behind.

We were charmingly welcomed with Royal honours. Groups of influential citizens waited to welcome us at the station, the Ritz hotel where we stayed was festooned with flags and even the maidservants were lined up in the corridor as a guard of honour. The church was crowded for the service and we had luncheon at the hotel afterwards, though we could not do justice to it, for every few minutes we had to receive some delegation, and then there had to be long pauses for speeches and presentations while the food congealed on our plates.

Never had I seen so many delegations of old men, delegations of young women, delegations of children, headed by banners and carrying bouquets. My sister-in-law got so many flowers we could hardly carry them away. There was a warmth and sincerity about the whole proceedings that was charming. It would have been impossible to find kinder people. One lady who was presented to us had actually driven fifty miles just to offer us the loan of her car. As she could speak no English and we could not understand her Canadian-French, we had to carry on conversation with the aid of an interpreter. She told us that her grandmother had been Greek, and that she herself had always been so drawn to that country that she had followed its fortunes with interest.

After two days in Montreal and some conscientious sightseeing with Sir Mortimer and Lady Davis, who were there at the same time, we returned to New York. There was no question of entertaining for us at that time as we were all in mourning, but we visited several of the principal cities in the United States and met a great many people.

We went to Washington and made the acquaintance of the Diplomatic Corps and attended one or two informal receptions which were given for us.

At one of these a dear old lady was presented to me, the hostess introduced me as Prince Christopher of Greece, adding obligingly for her information: "Son of the King of Greece." I sat down on a chair beside her and we talked for a few minutes. Presently she asked me whether Greek customs were very different from American ones. . . . I replied that many of them were.

"They must be," she said, gravely considering the question, "for instance, I noticed just now that your father's name was Mr. King, yet yours is Mr. Prince. Don't the son take the father's name in your country, then?"

We managed to crowd in a visit to Palm Beach, where we went in a family party, my wife and I, her son William Leeds and his wife, my brother Andrew and my sister-in-law, and Lady Sarah Wilson. We stayed at the Poinsiana Hotel, an enormous rambling place, built entirely of wood and having thirteen miles of corridors, in which one was perpetually getting lost. It took us ten minutes to get down from our rooms to the grill for lunch, and we envied the pages who sped backwards and forwards along the corridors on bicycles. I never knew an easy moment from the hour we arrived, when I noticed a big steel hook firmly embedded in the wall by the window and, on enquiring its use of the chambermaid, was told that it was there in case of fire, when the bedclothes could be tied to it to form a rope! I looked gloomily down on a drop of sixty feet, which no amount of sheets could be expected to stretch to, and registered the devout hope that all the matchwood structure would not catch fire during our stay. But I need not have worried, for we had only been there twenty-four hours when my wife received the news of the death of her sister-in-law, and she and I returned to New York, leaving the others to follow us later.

Those months in America which could have been so happy were filled with misery to me, because of the knowledge of a terrible secret, a secret which I could never share.

After my wife's first operation in Athens the surgeons sent for me and told me that she was suffering from the most frightful disease that ever afflicted humanity . . . cancer. They had operated as well as they could, done everything possible to prolong her life. There might even be a respite of many years, but there was always the fear that one day . . .

So for the next two years I could only keep the knowledge to myself, stifle my anxiety, and hope, even against hope. Above all things I was determined that she

should never learn the truth. I could at least give her peace of mind, if I could do nothing else. Once in Paris, where we went after our short stay in America, I was nearly defeated.

I had been out one afternoon and came back to the Ritz, where we were stopping, to find my wife in a pitiful state of nerves. The woman friend who had been to tea had actually asked her whether it was true that she had been operated on for cancer in Athens!

"Christo, I know you won't deceive me," she implored me, "tell me the truth; swear it to me." There and then I perjured myself for ever, swore to her the most sacred oaths I could think of, that she had no cancer, that there had never even been any question of her having it. Maybe I damned my soul for all eternity, but I succeeded in convincing her.

The next morning I waited in the corridor and waylaid the doctors before they went into her room. I guessed that, in spite of what I had told her, she would want to be reassured, and I was taking no chances. So when she questioned them, as I had known she would, they were prepared, and their emphatic denials silenced her fears.

Soon afterwards we went over to London, to Spencer House, and my wife seemed so much better that I went for a week-end to Blenheim, to stay with the Duke of Marlborough. When I got back on the Monday morning I found that she had had a relapse and that the doctor was waiting to see me. He told me that her illness had entered into its last stage and that it could now only be a question of four months at the longest. He could only give me one grain of comfort. She would suffer no pain and there would be no need for her to know the truth. "It is for you to see that she never suspects it," he told me. "If she does she will lose the one consolation she has, the hope of getting better. You must go on living your ordinary normal life. Don't let her see you are worried. Go out to parties as usual and tell her

about them when you get back. Keep up the pretence that there is nothing seriously wrong with her."

It was some hours before I could trust myself to go into her room. I was so afraid of my voice betraying me.

From that day until she died, two months later, our life together was one game of make-believe. Playing my part was the hardest thing to do. To be perpetually on guard every moment of the day, to hide one's anxiety through heart-breaking weeks of watching her grow steadily weaker, to talk brightly of a future that could never be . . . there must be many others in the world who have had to do the same, people who will read this and understand.

My only comfort was that the surgeon's prophecy was fulfilled; she never knew an hour of pain. We kept up the illusion that there was nothing serious the matter with her to the very end. She used to insist on my accepting invitations to luncheons and dinners . . . "Because I won't have you sitting at home worrying over me when you know there is no need, and besides, the doctor says I will probably be able to go out again next week . . ." she would say. And I would force myself to go out to them so that I could bring her back the gossip and keep her still in touch with the world she loved. She never even guessed what it cost me.

I was aided and abetted by her little Scottish hospital nurse, Minnie Grant, an angel whose wings were hidden under a stiffly starched uniform. Together we thought up new moves in the game of pretence, for Nurse Grant was as good a bluffer as I. She even deceived me into thinking that she saw it all from the impersonal attitude of a nurse towards one of her cases, until the last day of my wife's life, when the priest came and administered communion to us both in her room. I heard a faint rustle behind the screen and peered round it. There was Minnie Grant on her knees, sobbing her heart out.

On the night my wife died a terrific thunderstorm

raged over London. The windows of her room were thrown wide open and, as I sat up alone with her, the thunder rumbled and crashed above us and great jagged flashes of lightning tore through the sky. It was like some vast symphony of sound and colour, even in the presence of death the majesty of it awed me.

Then suddenly there was a lull in the storm and I turned my eyes back to the room with its familiar furniture, the shaded night-light. I thought that my wife was sleeping. Then while I watched her the whole room became filled with a soft golden light like no other I have ever seen, for it had a radiance not of this world. For quite a minute it remained there, then faded away just as I heard a faint sigh from the bed. And I knew then that my vigil was over.

I have seen Death many times, seen him come for those I loved, as one day he will come for me. Yet I do not fear him. When you live with him walking at your shoulder and whispering day after day, week after week and month after month, as I have done, he either becomes the embodiment of an arch enemy or of an all-understanding friend. I prefer to think of him as a friend. For Death is a being, not just a name. I have often felt his soft touch on my shoulder, not the claw-like grip that writers of thrillers love to describe, but the kind hand of an infinitely compassionate angel, sent by an all-merciful God. We recognise him when we see him come to ease the sufferings of those we love, not the black-cowled death's head that human fear has created, but a shining being of glory who appears at the moment of our passing to give eternal peace.

CHAPTER XIV

THE DOG-ANGELS AND SOME DEVILS!

With apologies to the unknown author.

A LITTLE DOG-ANGEL

High up in the courts of Heaven to-day
A little dog-angel waits.
With other angels he will not play
But sits alone at the Gates.
"For I know that my master will come," says he
"And when he comes he will call for me."

And his master, far on the earth below,
As he sits in his easy chair,
Forgets sometimes and whistles low
For the dog that is not there.
And the little dog-angel cocks his ears
And dreams that his master's voice he hears.

And I know when at length his master waits
Outside in the dark and cold,
For the hand of death to open the gates
That lead to the courts of gold,
The little dog-angel's cheery bark
Will comfort his soul in the shivering dark.

THIS is a chapter which, I'm afraid, is going to shock many people, but I'm old enough and ugly enough to say what I think and assert my own opinions! When death claims me I hope that his wings will transport me to Heaven, for no other reason but that there I will meet all the pets I loved on this earth. Why should animals be put in a class separate from human beings? Are first, second and third classes assigned to travellers whose destination is Heaven?

"I don't think," says the American in me. Every animal lover must have realised at one time or another the eternal spark in a dog's eyes, which look at you with more understanding than any mortal. Love just pours out of those eyes, the only thing missing is speech . . . and perhaps better so! Nevertheless, I maintain that there is a divine spark somewhere, and I do not see why God Almighty should have amused Himself by creating all the animals He did without some ulterior motive. We are all here for something . . . as for the hereafter . . . ? Therefore, I say: "Give me Heaven." The other place is ruled by a fallen angel, but what could you meet there as far as animal life goes, but poor old Cerberus?

Animals were always a great factor in our lives, the love of them was transmitted to us by our father. Once, when he was on a tour of the provinces, a small dog of extremely doubtful origin, coloured white, black and a dash of yellow, followed him all day long and right up into the rooms he was occupying.

My father invited him upon his lap and showed him the photos of the family. When the dog barked at every introduction, he was promptly adopted and given the high-sounding name of "Mops." Mops lived to a ripe old age and caused many a heart-ache when he joined his ancestors. Then there was Dick, the French bull, and a very distinct personality, who also lived for years.

I really cannot remember when I actually started having pets of my own; what I know is that there was a time when the schoolroom contained one hare, two partridges and a tortoise. The hare was completely wild, as were the birds for that matter; the tortoise was a mild person according to his race, but the mess in that room was terrific. Anyway, this "zoo" was an unending joy to my professors, whom I would find, on coming in for my lessons, on all fours, trying to catch either a partridge or the hare.

That collection of animals did not last long, as my brother Nicholas, always an ardent hunter, took the partridges and let them loose on some islands which belonged to my father, hoping they would multiply and produce some good shooting, and the hare and the tortoise were let loose in Tatoi forest.

My own private dog was given to me by Princess Victoria of England at Sandringham. He was a Scottie and his name was Sandy. Anything more human than that never existed. My brother Andrew had a huge Aberdeen called "Billy," one of the biggest I have ever seen. Billy and Sandy were the best of friends; they would go off into the Palace garden after cats. Billy would get hold of the head, Sandy of the tail, and a tug of war would ensue—the miserable cat being torn in two, naturally. Horrible, but true! A cat was Sandy's end. In a fight the cat scratched him in the eye, blood-poisoning set in, and in a few days he left an inconsolable human being behind him. They tell you: "Get another dog," but if you lose a friend is it so easy to fill that aching void?

Sandy was buried in the Palace gardens by a gardener and myself. Another little piece of oneself gone underground! He was given a marble slab and, funnily enough, his grave has always been respected, through all our exiles and various revolutions.

Somebody else joined the party during Sandy's lifetime and that was Marco, the monkey. Monkeys to some people may be impersonal with their eternally sad expression, but anyone who has owned one quickly sees that there is something behind all that. There is an uncanny intelligence in those beasts, as I know to my cost. He landed on my head one evening at a small café at Kephisia, straight out of the blue, or, I should rather say, a huge plane tree. We made friends at once and I offered to buy him. The proprietor of the place, knowing us, asked an exorbitant price, so Marco was bidden a



PRINCESS CHRISTOPHER OF GREECE, WHO WAS PRINCESS FRANÇOISE OF FRANCE BEFORE HER MARRIAGE

fond farewell and I never gave the matter a second thought.

Next day, though, on returning to our villa after an outing, what did I see, to my amazement, but Marco placidly sitting on the front-door steps, fleaing Sandy's tail! An A.D.C. of my brother's had gone and bought him for a quarter of the price and offered him to me. By a strange irony of fate the donor was Colonel Mano, father of King Alexander's wife! Who could have foretold that only a few years later Alexander would die from a bite administered by one of Marco's descendants? Marco was a source of many joys and many, many sorrows. Higher up I referred to a fallen angel; Satan himself wasn't in it when Marco got one of his tantrums! He was generally chained to an iron railing on the terrace overlooking the tennis court. There were lots of bushes and trees there where he could disport himself. There was one particular tree which he loved; I have no idea what it is called, all I know is that it grows to a tremendous height, is fibrous and, when young, shoots straight up, and is extremely flexible. He used to pull the slender tree down, then, with one kick, fly up into the air and descend on the other side. This would go on for hours. One day I was watching this performance when he stopped, still holding the tip of the tree; a diabolical expression spread over his features, he let go and the tree hit me fair and square on the nose! No astronomer ever in his wildest dreams saw such a multitude of planets as I did at that moment! He hid behind a bush and, I can swear, the devil laughed!

At sunset I would take him up to my room, where he would be installed on an arm-chair behind a cushion for the night.

One evening blood-curdling shrieks started issuing from that room. With a friend of mine I rushed upstairs. I had some bottles of liquor for making cocktails; there was Marco sitting with a bottle of gin in one hand and a

bottle of whisky in the other, out of each of which he had imbibed a quarter. Before we could do anything, the bottles were hurled at our heads and the monkey jumped on to the window-sill and fell out; luckily he had a belt and chain on, by which he was hauled back, swearing and screaming. He fell asleep at once, but next morning the hang-over was terrific!

In Athens he lived on the radiator in the corridor opposite my sitting-room door, and for exercise he would be attached by his long chain to a scaffolding which had been erected in front of the Palace after the fire of 1909, which had destroyed the whole middle part.

One day he got hold of a brick about an inch and a half thick and six inches long. There was a sentinel of the Palace guard doing sentry-go underneath, and, after taking careful aim, Marco sent his missile straight at the man's head and only missed him by the fraction of an inch! It made a very nice little dent, though, in the ground!

Next day a deputation from the guard, headed by the sergeant-major, came to inform me that it was impossible for them to do their duty with a devil lurking somewhere overhead!

When we left in 1917 Marco was left behind and returned to his former owner. When we returned, Marco was dead—of consumption, I was told. I don't believe it . . . even monkeys have a heart!

Jack was the next dog, a grey Scottie who lived to the ripe age of fifteen. If ever a dog had human intelligence, he certainly did. My stepson saw him sitting in the window of a dog-shop in the Champs-Elysées, in company with an enormous police dog. He simply could not resist the appeal of that personification of dignity and impudence, so he entered the shop and bought them both. "Tell," the police dog, was kept for himself, while "Jack" was presented to his wife. When they left for England Tell was somehow smuggled

in, but as he has also joined his ancestors, I don't think that matters very much any more. Jack was left in my care, but as we had grown so attached to one another by the time the couple returned, he was given to me. He never left me, and accompanied me on all my travels until he became too old. To all his friends he was known as " the Banan " ! I got him a wife in Paris, coal black, and they produced litter after litter of beautiful children who were all pepper and salt. I have no idea how I got away with it, but at a dog show in Rome the two eldest ones won a gold medal each and a silver cup between them.

The judge was an Englishman, invited to Italy for the occasion ; he had no idea of my identity, I having made it a condition with the Italian committee that both dogs and owner were to remain anonymous. It was all a joke really, as I had lost their pedigrees. Anyway, when my turn came to show off my canine children and I ascended the platform, the judge looked at them, felt them and smelt them ; then, turning to me, he said : " Sir, I have never seen such a fine pair of dogs anywhere." Next thing I knew was that gold medals and silver cups were being hurled at my head ! Rome has since then been heavily populated by their progeny. The mother, though, shortly afterwards developed a virulent form of eczema ; as it was incurable, the vet. had to administer an injection to assist her into a better world.

A strange thing happened a few years later. As the " Banan " was too old to travel any longer, he remained at home and had to be carried in and out of the house by the housekeeper, as the steps were too high for his old legs. Far away, one day, I read an article in a newspaper saying that dogs of that breed, when they felt they were growing too old, very often committed suicide, preferably by drowning. Two days later I got a letter from the housekeeper telling me that the " Banan " had

done exactly that! He had been taken out as usual and left in his favourite sun-patch; when she went to bring him home, she looked around vainly until she found his little grey body floating in the pond in front of the entrance. The queer part is that the pond was surrounded by a parapet much higher than the steps he was carried over. As nobody was in the garden at the moment, it is obvious what had happened. Had I been there I would have followed him in, and this story would never have been written. Very probably some of my readers will say: "Sorry you didn't!" What real lover of dogs, though, could possibly disagree with me if I say that rain might be caused by one of those little dog-angels a-sniffing round the corner of some over-burdened and tired old cloud?

Now there are "Buster," my French bull, and "Tim," my wife's cocker spaniel, who loathe and detest each other cordially! "Buzz," the Peke, was an interlude, self-assured and always knowing everything better than anyone else: he went out and met a taxi. Mind, though, the taxi did not run over him, he ran into the taxi and must have injured his head, for about a week later he started losing his eyesight, then became blind and finally peacefully passed out.

I was in a flower-shop in New York one day when from behind a partition I heard somebody having a very animated conversation. It was rather one-sided certainly, for the answers of the other person consisted of grunts and squawks! I peered around the corner and saw a green and red parrot talking his head off to his neighbour. He was bought on the spot, but as I was leaving that same day for Washington, I gave my name and address for him to be called for on my return. After about ten days the fowl was duly "phoned for," and he arrived in his cage, all done up in paper, fastened with pins and bits of string. On being unpacked he was placed on the gramophone in the sitting-room of my

hotel. He took good stock of his new surroundings, but said never a word. I went into the bedroom, and the moment he was left alone he started yelling: "Where's Christopher? Call the Prince. Oh, call the Prince!" His former owner had evidently not lost his time!

But worse was to follow, for a few days after I had to receive a Greek bishop. He was duly shown up to my apartment, flowing black robes, beard, cross, all complete. The moment he was ushered into the *salon* the parrot cocked his head at an impertinent angle and regarded the sedate prelate with a beady, yellow eye. Then, to my horror and the bishop's rather shocked surprise, he said: "Hallo, Rosie! And what have you done with that banana?" I coughed politely and invited my guest to be seated, but that horrible parrot suddenly went off into gales of the most unseemly, hellish and contagious laughter it has ever been my privilege to hear. It was so contagious that I started off too, and what the bishop thought of us both is nobody's business! Well, whatever he had come to tell me was said in a mighty hurry; he left, probably in a huff, and we have never met from that day to this! The bird went to Italy with Stucker on a different boat to me. When I got home, though, the "Prince" had been forgotten and was regarded with mistrust, not to say positive hate! One of the footmen was now the object of his affections.

The poor parrot died shortly after of pneumonia during one of my absences. He would probably have been still alive to-day had those idiotic servants listened to Doctor Axel Munthe, who had taken a violent fancy to him.

My first cousin, the Duchess of Cumberland's eldest son, had been given a lion cub. This cub grew up to become a magnificent lion, as tame and affectionate as any dog. The beast followed him everywhere, and he

hit on a marvellous dodge to secure privacy in the train compartment whenever he went from Gmünden (their country place) to Vienna and back. The lion would lie full length on the opposite seat. When some old lady, in a desperate hurry, would open the door and see the king of beasts gracefully reclining in her favourite seat, she would give an inarticulate gasp, fall backwards on to the platform and, as often as not, miss the train! The police finally came one day and, humming and hawing, said that, although tame, such animals grew dangerous with age, and it would be better out of the way. So my cousin resigned himself to the inevitable and made a present of his pet to the Schönbrunn "Zoo." The lion, though, after being separated from his master, refused to eat and just pined away. The director let my cousin know, who at once went to see his dying friend. There was one wag of the tail, the head was lifted for one last look . . . it fell back, and that was the end!

Why is St. Mark always represented with a lion, if my Heaven theory is not correct? Why did St. Francis preach to the birds? and why should St. Jerome have a particular affection for a pig?

Queen Alexandra had some little Japanese dogs, white and black, which looked like Pekes. They had been given her by the Empress of Japan and were her constant companions, and went everywhere with her. One day, in Denmark, my father managed to ride over the nose of one of them on his bicycle—an extremely difficult feat—as the noses of that particular breed are practically non-existent. It was naturally involuntary, but the nose bled, and what Queen Alexandra didn't say would be enough to blow up any printing press! She adored animals and had numbers of them; there was a corner of the Marlborough House garden allotted for their burial-ground. Each dog had his little tombstone with some inscription on it, describing his or her qualities.

When Cæsar, King Edward's famous terrier, died she even wanted to have a cross put on his grave! She was politely but firmly dissuaded from this project by the shocked family and entourage, so she gave up the idea reluctantly.

Yet how much worthier are some of our little friends of having a cross put on their graves than many a so-called human being I have known?

CHAPTER XV

THE SO-CALLED ANASTASIA—PSYCHIC EXPERIENCES

I CROSSED over to America again in August, 1927, and arrived in New York during a record heat-wave. Half the population had fled to the country or the sea, my stepson and his wife among them. My cable did not reach them until next day, so there was no one to meet me at the dock, to the delight of the newspaper men, who were able to write pathetic stories of " the lonely arrival of an exiled Royal Highness." I gave them the slip as soon as I could, jumped into a taxi and drove to the Ambassador Hotel, from where I started telephoning such old friends as were still in the city. Before the end of the day my engagement book was filled for weeks ahead.

American hospitality is something that has to be experienced to be believed. Suffice it to land in New York with two friends and you will find yourself with a host of others in less than a month. Sociability is a national characteristic of Americans, and no other race cultivates the art of friendship to such an extent.

The day after my arrival William B. Leeds and Xenia descended on me and took me off to their house on Long Island. The heat was terrific, and we spent most of the time in the water or lounging lazily in bathing suits in the garden. In the cool of the evening we would sit on the flowered terrace built over the boat-house and watch the great golden harvest moon rise out of the sea.

Xenia was just then interesting herself in the strange

case of a girl who claimed to be the Grand Duchess Anastasia, the youngest daughter of the late Czar. She had been found in one of the hospitals in Berlin, where she had been taken after trying to commit suicide, and her story was that, when the rest of the Imperial Family had been murdered at Ekaterinburg, she had been knocked unconscious with the butt end of a rifle, which had inflicted a terrible wound, but she had survived this and was later rescued by one of the soldiers of the Red Guard. This man, the son of peasants in the neighbourhood, had put her in a rough cart, she said, and taken her, with his mother and sister, over the frontier into Roumania. They remained in Bucarest for several months and there she had a child by him. During all this time they lived on the proceeds of a necklace which had been sewn into the girl's clothes and had belonged to the Czarina. This they sold to a jeweller in Bucarest. When the money was exhausted the soldier had taken her to Berlin and left her there destitute. In her despair she had thrown herself into the canal, but had been rescued by a patrol boat.

This was her story, and, fantastic as it was, there were many who believed then—and still believe—in her, among them one or two members of the Imperial Family. The Russians in Berlin subscribed money, took her out of the hospital in which she had been found, and set about trying to prove her claim. Dozens of people who had known the Grand Duchess Anastasia were brought to see the girl in the hope that they might be able to identify her, but none of them could come to any definite conclusion. Several admitted that the resemblance was extraordinary and that it was a curious fact that certain scars and other small physical peculiarities which the Czar's daughter was known to have had were found on the unknown girl. But beyond that there was little to justify her statements. In the first place she was unable to speak Russian, which the Grand Duchess Anastasia,

like all the Czar's children, had talked fluently, and would only converse in German. Her supporters put this down to the fact that her injuries and privations had deranged her mind and made her unwilling to speak her native language on account of its painful associations.

The poor girl was a pathetic figure in her loneliness and ill health, and it was comprehensible enough that many of those around her let their sympathy over-rule their logic. But at the same time there was little real evidence to substantiate her story. She was unable to recognise people whom the Grand Duchess Anastasia had known intimately, and her descriptions of rooms in the different palaces and of other scenes familiar to any of the Imperial Family were often inaccurate. Even when the Grand Duchess Olga, the favourite aunt of the Czar's children, was brought to see her, she gave no sign of recognition and could not remember the pet name by which she was always known in the family.

The Press, of course, took a great part in the discussion, for when it first arose there was the question of the disposal of the " vast fortune " which the late Czar was supposed to have left in an English bank. When on investigation it was proved to be only five hundred pounds and was awarded by order of the English court to the Grand Duchess Xenia, as next of kin, public interest in the unknown claimant dwindled. But the controversy was kept up by members of the Imperial Family in exile and created a great deal of bitterness. Before long some of them were not on speaking terms.

Among the most ardent supporters of the unknown girl's claim was Gleb Botkin, son of Dr. Botkin, who had been the devoted physician of the Imperial Family and died with them at Ekaterinburg.

I was staying with my niece at Long Island when he came to dine, and the three of us sat discussing the question far into the night. Mr. Botkin was genuinely convinced that the poor girl who had been rescued from

the canal in Berlin was the Grand Duchess Anastasia, and his sincerity was obvious as he described his visit to her and the conversation they had had together. He had taken with him a portfolio of his sketches and told us that what had impressed him most was the fact that she had picked out the ones he had done in Siberia, when he had seen the Czar and his family for the last time. "I am absolutely certain that her story is true," he said.

He spoke with such feeling of the terrible sufferings she had undergone and her present loneliness, disowned as she was by her relations and left among strangers, that Xenia burst into tears and cried that something must be done immediately. "We must bring her over to America; I will pay all the expenses, and she can live with me," she said.

I was more than half convinced myself, but at the same time I considered that we ought to have more definite proof before undertaking so great a responsibility. I suggested that instead we should go to Denmark, try to interest the Dowager Empress Marie in the girl who, if her claim proved to be true, was her own granddaughter, and investigate the case for ourselves.

This plan was decided upon, and it was settled that we should sail in the spring. And there the matter dropped.

I had forgotten all about it when a few months later Dorothy Caruso, the widow of the famous tenor, rang me up at my New York hotel and asked me to go to a séance with her.

My study of psychic research dates from the day I met W. T. Stead at a luncheon party in London in 1910. I was attracted to him both by the charm of his conversation and by the fact of his seeming difference from the rest of his world, and, after the party had broken up, we walked down Regent Street together.

Suddenly he asked me whether I had ever gone in for any experiments in spiritualism. I told him no; that the subject interested me, but that I had had no practical

experience of it. He suggested then that I should come to his office one afternoon and have a sitting with a new medium he had heard of but had not yet experimented with. We made an appointment for the next week.

When I arrived there, I was rather surprised at the very mundane surroundings in which the séance was to be held. The bright room with its comfortable easy-chairs; the shorthand-typist seated in one corner ready to take notes, and the very ordinary-looking young man who was introduced to me as the medium, did not suggest anything of an occult atmosphere. The medium went into a trance as simply and naturally as though he had fallen asleep. Presently a torrent of words poured from his lips: exclamations, disjointed sentences, long phrases that seemed to me to have no meaning, but I saw that the girl's pencil was moving briskly over her pad, covering page after page.

Then Stead took something out of his pocket and gave it to the medium. "Tell me what this is." There was silence for a moment. "Join hands," Stead whispered, and I gave one hand to him and with the other grasped the cold, limp hand of the medium. "The thing I am holding is a cross—a cross of rubies—and it has some link with the person who is holding my hand. It once belonged to someone in his family, to a woman whose personality was so strong that she influenced the whole destiny of that family and the whole world of her day."

A moment later the medium came out of his trance, became again an ordinary-looking young man, and departed.

Stead put the ruby cross into my hand. "That belonged to your ancestress the Empress Catherine."

The shorthand report of the séance was carefully typed out and Stead sent me a copy. It conveyed very little to me, but I locked it away among my papers. That was in 1910.

In 1932 I was sorting out the contents of an old box

when I came upon it again and read it through out of curiosity.

It was no longer incomprehensible, for, although I had not realised it at the time, it foretold everything that happened in the intervening years. For me it had predicted the Balkan wars, the revolution in Greece, our exile. For Stead only: "a long journey . . . a ship."

Reading it again so unexpectedly, twenty years after my friend had gone down in the *Titanic*, was like hearing a voice from another world . . . that world in whose existence he so fervently believed.

I had thought of W. T. Stead several times on that last crossing of mine to the States in 1927, perhaps because I was reading Bradley's *Towards the Stars* in which the author describes the extraordinary results obtained by a medium who was at that time making a sensation in New York.

This man, an American from the Middle West, of humble parentage and quite illiterate, had, when in trance, an amazing command of languages and spoke fluently in several different ones. On more than one occasion he had both talked and written what Oriental experts recognised as the purest and most scholarly Chinese and he had also carried on long conversations in perfect French, Italian and German, whereas it had been proved that he had received only the average country school education and had never at any time in his life learnt any foreign language.

The book interested me so much that I determined if possible to see the man, but the time had passed so quickly at Long Island that I had not found an opportunity to do so. I was delighted then when Dorothy Caruso told me that the medium who was to take part in this séance was the very man whom I wanted to

meet. The only condition I made was that my name should not be revealed and I was told that this would be quite easy to arrange as neither the people at whose house the séance was being held, a Mr. and Mrs. Cannon, nor the medium knew the names of any of those who would be present.

The circle was a small one, Dorothy and I, her brother, Mr. Benjamin and the two Cannons. The room into which we were shown had all the usual paraphernalia lying about—a bowl of water, a guitar, aluminium trumpets—and I thought with some disappointment that this séance would probably be just the average type of thing.

Then the lights were turned out and almost immediately the medium went into trance. In the pitch darkness we heard faint rustlings and tappings, then suddenly there was a wild war-whoop coming apparently from right between my feet and startling me so that I nearly leapt into the air. Mrs. Cannon whispered that it was the medium's Indian control who always announced his presence in this way.

Next came a peal of childish laughter, followed by sounds of someone dabbling in the bowl of water. I held out my hand: "Now shake hands with me," I said, and a little wet hand was put into mine. I have no explanation for it, but I certainly felt it and held it firmly for several seconds. Then there was silence, broken only by the heavy breathing of the medium. Suddenly one of the trumpets rose from the floor and hit me lightly on the head as though to attract my attention. At first I heard only a faint murmur, then the words came clearly. To my amazement they were Russian.

"Don't you recognise me?" The soft voice seemed curiously familiar, but I could not identify it. "I have been following you around," it went on with a little laugh. "I am Tatiana."

The only Tatiana I knew was the second daughter of the Czar, Nicholas II, and I said so. "Yes, of course." I could swear there was a note of triumph in the voice.

"We are all here," it went on in perfect Russian. "We send you our love and kiss you"—there was a sound of someone blowing a kiss—"and Anastasia wants you to know that the person who is on her way to America is not she. You must tell Auntie Xenia this."

The voice died away and the trumpet fell to the ground.

Three days later I heard that the unknown girl who claimed to be the Grand Duchess Anastasia had arrived in New York. My niece Xenia, impatient of the delay, had her brought over and immediately took her to her home in Long Island without letting me know.

I was very anxious to meet her and moved Heaven and earth to do so, for I had been one of the last of the family to see Anastasia on my visit to Russia in 1916, and I felt sure that I would have no difficulty in recognising her. However, I was never allowed within miles of Xenia's protégée, so I do not feel qualified to give an opinion. She stayed several months with my niece, who implicitly believed her story and showed her the greatest kindness. Then her treatment of the Grand Duchess Xenia, sister of the late Czar, led to a quarrel with William Leeds, who turned her out of the house.

I had another rather curious psychic experience during that same visit to the United States.

In Rome, some years previously, I had made the acquaintance of John Hayes Hammond, Junior, the well known scientist and musician. Knowing that I love music above all things, he invited me soon after my arrival in America to stay with him at his estate, Gloucester, Massachusetts, so that I could hear the

wonderful organ he had invented. As this was too big to be accommodated in an ordinary house, he had built another especially for it, he told me, but as this was not yet completed we would stay at his old family house.

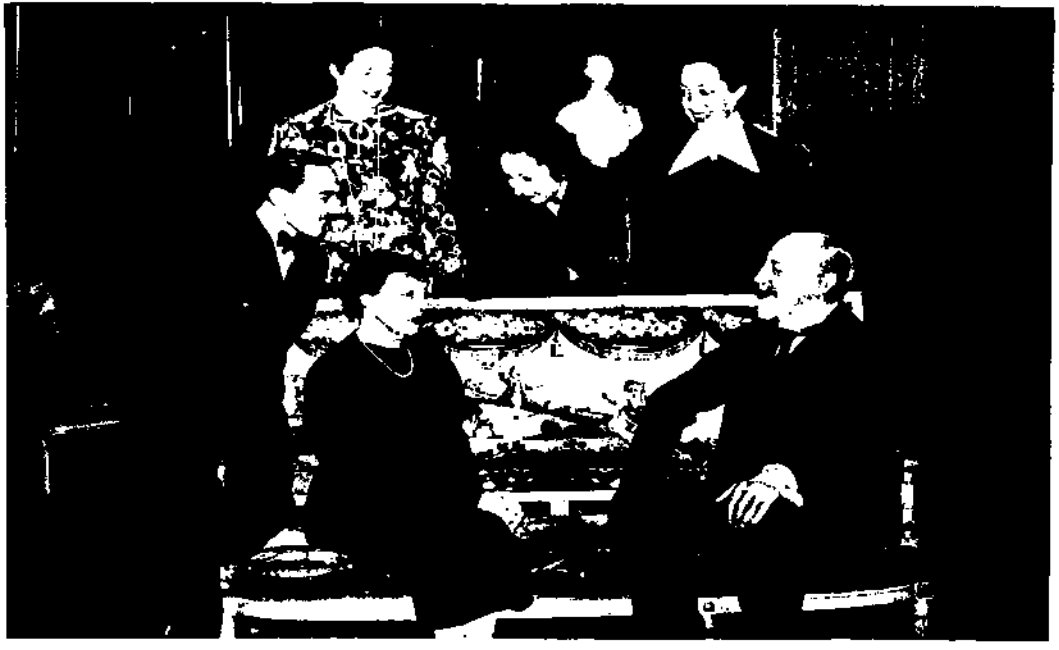
Gloucester must surely be one of the most beautiful spots in America, I thought, when I drove there on a golden autumn afternoon. The house was in the midst of a pinewood sloping down to the sea; the gardens were a blaze of dahlias and chrysanthemums.

The old Gothic house that had belonged to several generations of Hammonds was dominated by the new one, which had almost the dimensions of a Russian palace and seemed to be a mixture of every known architectural style, from the Middle Ages to the eighteenth century. A moat, spanned by a drawbridge and portcullis, led to a large courtyard enclosed by the façades of old Normandy manors brought over from France. One had the idea of being in a village square. To complete the illusion, at one end of the courtyard was what appeared to be the entrance of a church, with double doors giving on to a vast, dimly lighted hall which contained the organ.

There could have been no more ideal setting for music. The restful village atmosphere of the courtyard, the cathedral-like calm and austerity of the hall and the exquisite tones of the organ combined to create an unforgettable impression of sheer beauty.

We walked back the short distance to the old house with Boris, Hammond's dog, a magnificent Borzoi, trotting in front of us.

After dinner we sat talking in the lounge. The servants had gone to bed and the house was still as only a house set in a deep forest can be. Suddenly Hammond said: "It's queer you know, but this place is supposed to be haunted." Of course I immediately began to question him. He told me that the disturbances had only occurred in the last year or two and there was no



PRINCESS CHRISTOPHER OF GREECE WITH HER SISTERS, THE DUCHESS OF AOSTA AND PRINCESS PIERRE MURAT, HER BROTHER (*left*), THE COMTE DE PARIS, AND HER PARENTS, THE DUC AND DUCHESSE DE GUISE

explanation to account for them, for the house had no dark history and had always been occupied by people who had led lives of blameless normality and died in their beds in orthodox fashion. Yet all the same, footsteps were heard in empty rooms, door-knobs turned of themselves, occasionally a laugh or a sigh was heard, or the silken rustle of a woman's dress. He himself had sometimes felt unseen hands laid on his shoulders when he was playing the organ.

The strange part of it was that Boris, unlike most dogs who are terrified of any psychic phenomena, seemed to have made friends with the ghost and would often run to the door as though greeting a visitor.

" Well, I hope I shall make the acquaintance of your ghost," I said . . . and broke off for, as I spoke, something fell apparently from the ceiling, hit me on the head with the sharp rap of a child's marble, bounced off on to Hammond's shoulder and from there to the floor, where it bounced the whole length of the room until it struck the opposite wall. Boris, who had bounded after it with a joyful bark, lay down by the wall, apparently waiting for the game to continue. Neither Hammond nor I had seen anything, but he obviously had. We discussed the mystery for another ten minutes and then went up to bed.

I was half-undressed when I remembered that I had not locked my door. Going over to it, I was about to turn the key, when something made me open it a few inches. There was no one there, but to my surprise I felt the knob wrenched from the outside and the door was shut. I tried again and again to open it, turned the handle this way and that, locked and unlocked it, but I could not move it. In the end I gave up the struggle and left it. Half an hour later I made another attempt. It opened immediately. I locked it then and kept it locked until the next morning.

Coming from a stricken Europe only just struggling on to its feet again, it was strange to find oneself in the land of plenty that was America in those boom years of 1927 and 1928, before the great crash on Wall Street sent fortunes tumbling down like a house of cards. Entertaining was on a scale that must have vied with the gilded age; in spite of Prohibition there seemed no shortage of champagne, or of anything else for that matter. New York Society danced and amused itself as European Society had done before the War.

Never in my life have I received so many invitations. Luncheon parties, dinner parties, yachting parties, tennis parties . . . every kind of party . . . the ghosts of those past gaieties haunt me still! Most of them have grown dim with the years; others will always stay with me for the friendships they represent.

A house I loved to go to was the Kearsley Mitchells', outside Philadelphia. I shall never forget one party they gave in the depth of winter—and believe me, winter in Philadelphia is the real thing. Sixty guests had been invited to dinner that night and only about a third of their number arrived, twenty intrepid souls who had braved the snow that had been falling steadily for the last three days. Neither cars nor carriages could approach the house, for drifts five and six feet deep lay along the roads. One or two of the guests had sleighs, the rest came on foot and arrived literally wet through. Many of them sat down to dinner in borrowed shawls and dressing-gowns while their own clothes were dried, and one poor lady was so overcome by the cold that she had to be put to bed, dosed with whiskey and surrounded with hot-water bottles. All through the evening the snow went on falling, with the result that the roads became really dangerous in the dark and the Mitchells refused to allow anyone to leave the house until next day. So beds were made up anywhere and everywhere, people slept on sofas, in chairs, even on the billiard table.

Another house I loved to visit was Elizabeth Marbury's. Despite the difference in our ages she and I became great friends, for she was one of those people who remain for ever young. Some of my happiest hours in America were spent during week-ends with her at her old farm-house in Maine, Belgrade Lakes, where we fished for pike on the lake, with Miss Marbury sitting weightily in the stern of the boat, so that it dipped perilously every time she moved.

It was she who introduced me to the William Wrights, who were then the givers of New York's most original parties and were always the first to entertain the newest film stars, the most fashionable musicians and other celebrities.

I remember one circus party they gave, to which I and my cousin, Prince Dimitri of Russia, went as foreign diplomats, with false beards and a whole array of tinsel orders pinned on our breasts.

At a dinner at their house I met Charlie Chaplin and George Gershwin, the composer. It began as the usual form of dinner, but I defy anyone to be formal for more than ten minutes in the company of Charlie. He began telling funny stories, mimicking the different characters in his inimitable way, first to his neighbours and then to the table in general, for everyone else stopped talking to listen to him. Soon we were all convulsed with laughter, and even the grave butler and his satellites could hardly keep serious.

In the drawing-room afterwards Gershwin seated himself at the piano and began playing operatic airs while Charlie took up a newspaper and began to sing the words of the different advertisements in the manner of grand opera.

Then Paul Kochansky, the violinist, who was another of the guests, joined him and the two gave a burlesque of a circus, with Charlie as the tight-rope walker.

It is in such impromptu moments that one best sees

the extraordinary genius of Charlie Chaplin, the perfection of his very gesture, that individual finesse that no other star of the stage or screen possesses. But for that tragi-grotesque role the world has forced upon him, he might have expressed his genius in so many ways. He would have made a brilliant musician, a great tragedian and possibly a great writer, if he had developed his gift.

Once he read me a poem of his and I was surprised both at its beauty and at the profound understanding of life it showed. It was touched with the melancholy that is inseparable from Charlie Chaplin, for, despite all his success and the glamour with which Hollywood has surrounded him, he is a tragic figure.

CHAPTER XVI

SETTLING IN ITALY—ROMAN HUNTS—MY MOTHER'S DEATH

AFTER Nancy's funeral I went to stay with my sister-in-law and her husband, the Henderson Greens, at Montclair, where their unfailing kindness and understanding helped in some degree to tide over the first desolate weeks of grief and loneliness. Then "Time" the healer stepped in, and the wound started closing gradually, though the scar remained.

At the end of some months in America I returned to London with my stepson William B. Leeds and my niece Xenia. The lease of Spenser House had expired, and everything had to be moved. Silver, furniture, pictures and linen, which had to be divided between William and me, were littered all over the place in hopeless confusion. I stayed at Claridges while the business was being attended to, and then, after spending Christmas with my mother, I departed for Italy, leaving her in my sister's care.

I could not bear London just then, with all its painful associations, and I wanted to choose a house where I could make a home for my mother. She had never really known a moment's peace since the outbreak of the Russian Revolution. Her homes, or rather her so-called homes, had been one hotel after another . . . in Switzerland, Paris, London . . . or at the best staying in other people's houses. She had accepted it all, with her usual profound and unswerving faith in God, with never one word of protest or complaint. It had been

thus all her life: never a thought for herself, always for others.

Never a morning had passed in Athens without her visiting charitable institutions, hospitals, schools and prisons. Whenever she entered a ward, or a classroom or a prison cell, it was like a ray of sunshine, and for everyone there was always a word of sympathy, compassion or encouragement. Many were the days and nights when she sat for hours on end by some poor sick bed, holding a hand that only relaxed its grasp on hers when Death stole in to take her place. Yet her own life held more than its fair share of sorrow.

I determined that she was at least going to have a home of her own if it lay in my power to give it to her, so I set about house-hunting in earnest.

I chose Italy, first because it would remind her of Greece, and secondly because the climate would suit her. As a preliminary step I went to Rome and stayed with Count and Countess Dentice di Frasso at their apartment. They both did all they could to dispel the gloom, and the Countess . . . Dorothy, as all her friends call her, with her boundless wit and sense of humour, did more than she will ever know to put me on my feet again.

At length I discovered a delightful villa belonging to the Baroness Aliotti, a charming and beautiful Irishwoman, who had married twice in Italy. The place was at that time practically, if not entirely, in the country. Now, alas, it has been so overbuilt that it is scarcely recognisable!

I fell in love with it at first sight. Its sunny loggias, terraces and big garden were just what I had been looking for, and there was a glorious view from the tower, which was at one side and looked so incongruous that I added another to balance it. The work of painting, rebuilding and putting in new bathrooms and kitchen ranges took several months, though the architect I engaged

proved to be a man of much resource, and of an economical turn of mind. Finding in the entrance hall a monumental fire-place, he suggested that it should be sold just as it was, as it would make such a beautiful tomb! However, it was put to a less lugubrious use, for we had it broken up, and made into several smaller fire-places for the new rooms.

In the interior decoration I was helped by my cousin, Prince Philip of Hesse, who later married Princess Mafalda, the King of Italy's second daughter. He has exquisite taste and their little house, in the park of the Villa Savoia, the King and Queen's residence in Rome, is a gem of art treasures of every description.

While the transformations were in progress I sent for all my possessions from Spenser House, and at the same time for all the things my mother had left behind her in Athens, when she went on that last voyage of hers to Russia. Mme Carolou had saved not only all her furniture and knick-knacks, but most of the things that had belonged to my father and the rest of the family, when the Royal Palace had been confiscated.

Eleven vans arrived from London, long before we were ready for them, and their contents were dumped down in the garden, just in front of the entrance. Luckily it was a mild spring! Then the cases started to come in from Athens, to make the chaos complete.

I became bald at an early age, but handfuls of such hair as remained to me were torn out trying to shift, push, paint and arrange everything in the shortest possible time. I had only two forms of exercise in those days . . . furniture removing and riding. While staying with the Frassos I had joined the Roman Hunt. The meets in those days were still comparatively near the city, for it was before the suburbs spread so much that horses had to be entrained or sent out on motor lorries. The Roman campagna may look flat and uninteresting to the new-comer, but nothing is more decep-

tive. It would be difficult to find its equal for ravines, torrents, unexpected stone walls and barbed-wire fences, and if you have managed to hunt it for a few seasons and survive, take my word, you need fear no other cross-country riding in Europe.

Nearly all Roman society, those, at least, who could afford to keep horses, were devotees of the sport ten or fifteen years ago. Now with the increasing difficulties of transport, it is not quite as popular as it was. However, the famous riding-school of "Tor di Quinto" is always present with its Italian and foreign pupils.

The Frassos lent me horses, one of which won me my first trophy. This consists in Italy of the fox's head, which is called the mask, not the brush as is customary in England. A foot is relegated to the second person in at the kill.

Later I hired an Irish hunter from a livery stable, an enormous beast, so tall that every time I put my foot in the stirrup to mount my knee would be almost in my mouth. He was as impetuous as most of his race. Whenever we came to some awe-inspiring declivity he would kick up his heels, neigh loudly and start down into the abyss, hell for leather. The first time it happened I closed my eyes and commended my soul to my Maker! Down we went, forded something I have no recollection of, and careered wildly up the other side. After a while I got accustomed to his methods, and this particular performance of his was an unending joy to the rest of the Hunt.

Spills are fairly frequent in the Roman Hunt. The Master, Marchese Casati, who has a beautiful American wife, had a particularly nasty one which might have ended disastrously, when I was following him one day. We were going up a steep hill, crowned by one of those awful fences. A few yards to the right of us was a gate, and I yelled to him to go through it, but he rejected the warning, His horse, which was tired after a long run,

failed to clear the obstacle, and crashed to the ground with its rider. I, who had sneaked round by way of the gate, was just in time to witness the fall. The horse picked itself up and started grazing, evidently well pleased with its achievement, but the poor Marchese lay prone on his face, quite unconscious. He is a handsome man with acquiline features, and a rather prominent nose, but when I turned him over on his back there was no nose to be seen, only a button in its place.

I looked hastily round for the rest of the Hunt, but unfortunately they were a long way behind, and meanwhile there was I with an unconsious and apparently badly injured man on my hands. Then I remembered having seen a water-trough down in the valley, and remounting I started off in quest of it. I had nothing to serve as a can except my soft hat, but I filled this to the brim, and holding it in my teeth I attempted to remount without spilling any. But I had forgotten a peculiarity of my steed, which was that he could never endure being touched on the back (I often wondered how on earth the stable-boys ever managed to saddle him). Well, as luck would have it I happened to touch one of his ticklish spots, and the result was a violent kick, which sent the hat flying, sousing me from head to foot with its contents. But I refilled it and mounted again, this time successfully.

By the time I reached the scene of the disaster the rest of the Hunt had come up, and I saw with relief that the Marchese had been taken charge of by a lady who was administering first aid. The water came in handy all the same, though. The nose has now been restored to its original form, but its owner was laid up for weeks.

My mother was to join me in Rome in April, so it was a case of working against time to get the promised home ready for her. Her rooms were arranged to

resemble, as far as possible, those she had had in Athens. The decorations and furniture were the same; all her books and little odds and ends were brought out; her pictures were hung on the walls.

In the intervals of moving furniture I used to go to small informal parties, for there is nothing more demoralising or soul-destroying than sitting alone and giving way to self-pity. The kindness shown to me then by all my friends in Rome is something I can never forget.

The Frassos had people in constantly for lunch or dinner, and streams of interesting personalities would flow through their one sitting-room, royalties, politicians, and artists of every description.

At length I decided that the best way of getting the workmen out of my new home was to occupy it myself. It was rather like camping-out, for the rooms were only half furnished, but it certainly speeded up the work. Then my mother, who had been staying with her lady-in-waiting and her maids in a hotel, arrived, and the place took on a more homelike atmosphere.

One of these maids had been with my mother nearly all her life. (I have already told the story of how she routed the Bolsheviks in a battle of words.) But now she had grown old and was crippled with rheumatism, so my mother sent for a Russian nurse to look after her. This lady also was by no means in her first youth. She had worked for many years in a hospital which my mother had founded at the Piræus in memory of my sister Alexandra, who had been the wife of the Grand Duke Paul of Russia. Hundreds of Russian sailors had been cared for there in addition to the regular Greek patients. But after the general upheaval in Greece in 1923, everything associated with our family was confiscated, and the hospital came under the ban. The staff was dismissed, and the nurses, most of whom were Russian, were turned out on the world to earn a living as best they could.

So in due course, the poor old nurse joined my mother at the hotel where she was staying, and immediately took charge of the crippled maid. But one fine Sunday my mother, on her return from church, found it impossible to get into her apartment. All the doors were locked, for the second maid, who was nervous, had taken the keys with her before going out, leaving only the old ladies' room, which gave access to all the rest, unlocked. My mother immediately tried this door, but it, too, refused to open, and only sighs and groans answered her repeated knocking and entreaties to be allowed to enter. At length in despair, and feeling really concerned, she summoned a floor waiter, who managed to climb into the room through the terrace window.

The scene that met his eyes made him gasp! There were the two old ladies sitting back to back on the floor, unable to move. The maid had fallen down, and the nurse, in struggling to help her up, had got a crick in the back and slipped down beside her. So they remained pressed so tightly against the door that there was no possibility of opening it!

The new home was everything we wished, and the garden an unending joy and my especial pride, for I laid it out myself. Queen Marie of Roumania, who is an enthusiastic gardener and knows more about flowers than anyone I have ever come across, lunched with us one day and gave me a much-valued compliment. I had had the idea of planting lily-bulbs in two enormous terra-cotta pots, and as they were then in full bloom the effect was lovely. Turning to me, she said: "I have taught you many things about flowers, but I am certainly going to copy this."

The house was always full of people, for the family came to stay in relays, and there was scarcely a day without someone coming or going. My mother enjoyed seeing people, and there were guests of every known nationality and every possible standing and social

position for luncheon and tea. As she always dined upstairs with her lady-in-waiting and went to bed early, I had to entertain alone in the evenings, and I did it as informally as I could.

For this reason I introduced into Rome the American habit of buffet dinners. Nobody who has not lived in the Eternal City, where the protocol is as the law of the Medes and Persians, can appreciate the blessing that innovation proved to be. All the Ambassadors, the Princes of the Holy See, the Blacks and Whites, could be invited together, without the risk of strained relations, for the charm of a buffet dinner is that you simply choose your partners and sit where you like. Far more amusing than a formal dinner-party, where you have got to sit next to someone you have never seen before and probably devoutly hope never to see again!

This placid, rather lotus-eating existence lasted for two years, and then my mother was taken from me.

A little while before she died I had a curious experience, which I give for those who are interested in psychical things.

The house was built in the form of an L, so that I could see my mother's wing from mine. I had returned from a party late one night and, on throwing back my shutters before getting into bed, I saw both her windows brilliantly illuminated. It was 2 a.m., and I wondered vaguely why she should be awake at that hour, and then I noticed that the light was not like that from a night-light or an ordinary electric lamp. It was a golden glow that seemed to fill the whole room.

Next morning I asked her what she had been doing awake at that time of night, but she answered in surprise that she had never slept better in her life, and had not once turned on the light.

I saw the strange light once more, and then left for Florence to stay with Queen Sophie, and forgot all about it.

But one morning I awoke with an extraordinary premonition that I ought to leave for Rome.

It had been arranged that my sister-in-law and her two daughters were to motor back with me in my car, and all through that morning I struggled with what I assured myself was only an attack of nerves. But at length the feeling that something was wrong became so definite that I told my niece, Princess Helen of Roumania, about it. Instead of laughing at me she advised me to go back at once, saying that she and her mother and sister would follow a few days later.

I started immediately and arrived in Rome to find my mother placidly having tea on the terrace with my sister. Inwardly cursing myself for a fool, I registered a vow never to give way to such flights of imagination in future!

But the next day my mother was taken ill, and in less than a week she had gone to join my father.

The night she died the golden glow was there again, a glorious golden light, full of promise of the reward to come.

CHAPTER XVII

UNTOWARD INCIDENTS AT FUNERALS—AXEL MUNTHE —HESSE WEDDING—MUSSOLINI

MY mother's illness was so short and the end came so suddenly that my telegrams to the members of the family who were abroad were sent too late, and they only arrived after all was over.

After a funeral service in Rome, the coffin was transported to Florence, where it was laid in the crypt of the Russian church, next to that of her son, King Constantine. That crypt was, if I may be allowed to say so, one of the gayest and least macabre places I have ever seen. A huge Greek flag, belonging to the cruiser commanded by Admiral Joannides, my sister's second husband, was slung across the ceiling ; the walls were covered with red damask on which hung eikons set in gold and silver. Greek, Danish and Russian flags covered the biers, so that the whole place was a mass of colour—not a touch of black anywhere : it was always looked after by Queen Sophie who only a few years later was laid there herself, adding, with her German flag, another touch of brightness. The duty of caring for the crypt was then taken on by her lady-in-waiting and faithful friend, Madame Contostavlos.

To me the gloomy panoply of sombre velvet hangings and yards of black crêpe is always rather distasteful. In the first place it is a paradox, if we believe that death is not the end of all things, and apart from that, I think that mourning is worn more fittingly in one's own heart than paraded to depress other people.

Writing of funerals, I shall always remember something that happened when I was taking my first wife's coffin over to New York to be buried in Woodlawn Cemetery.

My sister-in-law and I were met at the dock by an undertaker, a magnificent and pompous person whose countenance was composed to precisely the correct angle of professional sympathy. He immediately took charge of everything, and summoned with a dignified gesture the eight men he had brought with him to take up the coffin. Unfortunately they were so oddly assorted in size (one was certainly over six feet, and the other seven descended the scale down to about five feet two) that in trying to raise it to their shoulders they almost dropped it overboard, to the horror of my sister-in-law and myself who were following them down the gangway. Even the magnificent undertaker's composure seemed rather shaken, for he ordered them to: "Lay the casket down for a moment, gentlemen." There was only a pile of baggage to lay it on, but they obeyed hastily, and we waited in silence while they recovered themselves.

Suddenly I touched my sister-in-law's arm: "Do you see what I am seeing?" I whispered.

"Yes, of course, but I was hoping you hadn't noticed."

My wife's coffin was lying on an enormous black trunk on which was painted in glaring white letters the words "Grand Guignol"! (I remembered afterwards that a touring company had crossed over on the boat with us.)

For a moment we stared at it speechless, then our lips began to twitch.... "How Nancy would have laughed" ... we both exclaimed simultaneously. And laughed ourselves, for the first time in those sad days.

While I am on this subject I might as well record another untoward incident at a funeral, this time when my grandmother was buried in 1911 at St. Petersburg.

The burial of a member of the Imperial Family was a very stately ceremony in those days. The actual funeral

service lasted from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m., and was accompanied by glorious music. I pity any music-lover who has never heard the Russian burial service sung as it used to be on those occasions; he has missed the most beautiful harmonies known to this world.

My grandmother lay in state in the circular marble hall of the Palace on a bier raised upon a high dais almost hidden in flowers. A forest of tall wax tapers filled the entire hall with their light, and at the corners of the bier stood four of her old ladies-in-waiting. Heavy black hangings were draped between the marble pillars to form partitions for the different members of the family with their wives and children.

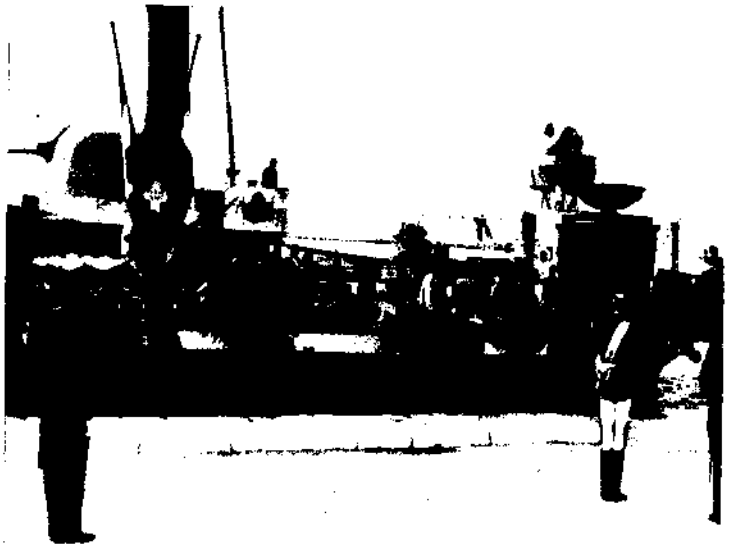
On the evening before the burial a very impressive service was held, and at its close each of the dead Grand Duchess's sons and daughters went up to take their last farewell of her before the coffin was sealed. One after another they mounted the steps of the dais, and bent over the bier to kiss the eikon on her breast.

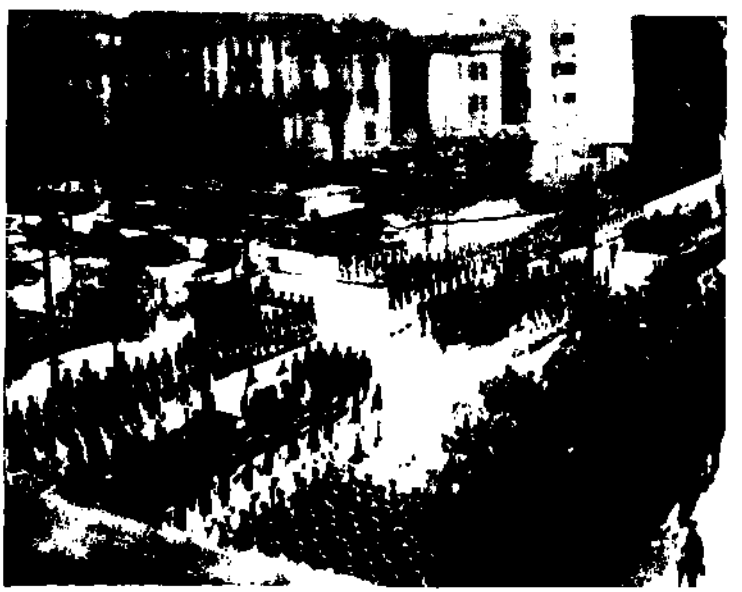
Suddenly the chanting of the priests was broken by a terrific crash, and a prolonged clattering of metal on the marble floor. The Grand Duke Dimitri, who was very short-sighted, had misjudged the distance, leant down too far and turned a complete somersault over his mother's coffin and down the steps of the dais.

He was helped to his feet, startled rather than hurt, and the ceremony proceeded, but I am afraid that those of us who belonged to the younger generation could hardly restrain our laughter.

Lest I should be thought too flippant in telling these stories I must add that I personally believe there is no death of the spirit, and that one day I shall peep over the edge of a cloud and find something to laugh at in my own funeral.

After my mother's burial in Florence I returned to Rome, where I set myself at once to re-arranging her rooms. There is nothing more gloomy than the melan-





TWO VIEWS OF THE FUNERALS OF KING CONSTANTINE, QUEEN OLGA AND QUEEN SOPHIE. (*Above*) THE COFFINS BEING TAKEN ABOARD A GREEK WARSHIP AT BRINDISI; (*below*) THE PROCESSION

choly custom of keeping intact the rooms of someone who will never need to use them again. They become mausoleums, and as time passes a morbid atmosphere is built up round them, so that one lacks the courage to change anything.

For instance, the Empress Maria of Russia would never hear of her husband, Alexander III's, two rooms in Gatchina being touched: every single thing, down to the handkerchief on his writing-table, had to remain as he had left it. The Winter Palace in St. Petersburg lost many an apartment for the same reason. The Emperor Nicholas I had died there, and his rooms, with all their associations, could not be interfered with; and the bloodstained bed of Alexander II who was killed by a Nihilist bomb was preserved intact with all his personal belongings. I made up my mind that this sort of thing was never going to happen in my house, so everything was changed.

I will not write of those first weeks at the villa after my mother's death with only memories for company, for everyone has gone through it at some time in their lives. After a while life took on its normal aspect again, and the business of entertaining and being entertained was resumed.

Queen Victoria of Sweden bought the villa next to mine, and while she was having it arranged I let mine to her for six months as I was going on a visit to America. She asked me to tea there one day before I sailed and insisted on the butler putting the table in its accustomed place, and having everything laid out exactly as I used to have it. A touch of human kindness I have never forgotten.

When the alterations to her own villa were completed she asked me to tea with her again, but on this occasion I made her laugh so heartily, at what I am afraid was rather an irreverent story of another royalty, that she had a relapse, and I was never invited again.

It was at the Queen's villa that I first met that baffling and dynamic Swede, Dr. Axel Munthe.

There are so many sides to Axel Munthe that you are never certain which is the real man, and indeed I do not think he knows it himself. The first thing that strikes you in him is the tremendous force of his personality. It is so vital, so violent, that one's own reactions to it are correspondingly strong. Wherever you mention his name you will find conflicting opinions as to his character. . . . "The man is a saint" . . . says one. . . . "He is a satyr . . ." says another, the truth being that whether people like or dislike him they do it intensely. He seems to have exercised an extraordinary fascination for women all his life. They began by being piqued at his brusque manners and apparent indifference to their charms, and ended by falling in love with him. I only know that my wife, my mother-in-law and I all agreed that we had spent one of the most amusing hours in our separate existences when we invited Munthe and Princess Jane di San Faustino to tea with us one afternoon and heard them solemnly debate the question of what had made her fall in love with him when she first came to Rome forty years ago. Between the two of them we were all helpless with laughter.

One thing very characteristic of Munthe is that he refuses to take himself seriously, or to let you take him seriously. If you tell him how much you have enjoyed reading his famous book, *San Michele*, his eyes will start to twinkle and he will make some flippant retort calculated to stem your eloquence. He is modest over his accomplishments. Few people know, for instance, that he sings and plays the piano remarkably well.

One afternoon he came to see me at my villa, and the little boy who led him about (for it was in the days of his blindness) guided him into my *salon* and left him there to wait for me. After a few minutes he found his way over to the piano. Coming down the stairs I heard

the strains of Schubert played with great delicacy of touch and feeling.

I am afraid I took an unfair advantage of the thickness of my carpets to steal quietly into the *salon* and listen while he drifted from one *Lied* into another, humming the words softly over to himself, unconscious of my presence. Yet when I told him at the end of half an hour or more that I had been there he was as covered with confusion as a schoolboy.

Queen Victoria of Sweden had the greatest confidence in Dr. Munthe. It was touching to see the way she relied on him towards the end, and I think his devotion and care for her undoubtedly prolonged her life. I only once remember her being attended by any other doctor, and that was while they were staying at my villa. The unfortunate substitute had a most distressing experience, for he felt violently ill after dinner one evening, started by being sick down the back of the lady-in-waiting and continued on one of my best blue velvet Louis XV chairs. The next day Munthe arrived, heard of the incident, and promptly told him to get out, "since any man who could behave so in public was no gentleman!"

I met my second wife, Princess Françoise of France, at the wedding of Prince Philip of Hesse and Princess Mafalda of Italy. Actually we had met several years before in Venice, when she was a very young girl, staying with her mother and sisters, and I was married to Nancy.

The Hesse wedding was a very grand affair at Racconigi, the King of Italy's estate near Turin. The Prince of Piedmont asked me to stay with him at his apartment in the Royal Palace in Turin, and every day we motored over together for luncheons and dinners and other wedding festivities. As he had a great deal

of work to do, and many people to see, we were invariably late, much to my horror.

It was there that I met Mussolini for the first time, and was instantly struck by that stupendous personality. My first encounter with him was the reverse of conventional.

As there were so many guests, the Queen arranged for a fleet of motor buses to transport the crowd from one place of entertainment to the other. One night there was a performance in the hot-houses, which are enormous and filled with priceless flowers, fruits and plants. A stage was erected in one of these houses, while in another supper was prepared for hundreds of guests.

We all climbed into our buses, magnificent Fiat touring cars. Prince Paul of Jugoslavia and I were sitting on a small side seat, all the other places being occupied, when Mussolini entered the bus. There was not a seat to be had, so we both got up and offered him our places. He very politely refused, saying that he could easily squeeze in between us. The seat was very narrow, so the result was that he sat half on Prince Paul's knee; and half on mine. I imagine few people have had that honour!

I have described the Duce's personality as "stupendous," and it is not an exaggeration, for one can use the word of him without being thought ridiculous, at least by those who have come in contact with him.

Few people will ever forget their first audience with him. The austerity of the surroundings in which he receives his visitors at the Palazzo Venezia, the vast room, bare of furniture, except for a few Renaissance armchairs standing against the walls. One's own footsteps echoing on the mosaic floor. And then, right at the very end, a desk, and one man seated at it. In the case of anyone else such an approach might seem theatrical, designed for effect. With the Duce it is perfectly natural, a part of his own personality. He is not a *poseur*, no man was

ever less one. There is about him a great simplicity, and a great dignity, combined with a charm such as few men have ever possessed.

But to return to the Hesse wedding. At supper I sat next to Queen Margherita, the King of Italy's mother. Her wit and charm are world famous, so I need not go into details. Suffice it to say that I was completely enthralled by her. Her presence there was a proof that she had emerged victorious from a family dispute that cast rather a shadow over the festivities.

As Philip was a Protestant and Mafalda a Roman Catholic, they had to have a Catholic marriage, but Philip's parents insisted, and quite rightly, that a Protestant marriage should follow the first one. This request was refused by the bride's relations, and Queen Margherita even sent a message saying that should such a ceremony take place she would not be present at the wedding. The result was that Philip's parents declined to attend the marriage, and the poor bridegroom, despite his happiness, was rather depressed by their absence as can well be imagined.

As I have said I met my second wife during these celebrations, but there were crowds of relatives and friends there, and we did not have much time to talk to one another. Anyway the impression remained, and when I went to America soon afterwards, I promised myself that immediately I got back to Europe I would try to see her again. But one morning I read in the newspapers that the daughter of the Duc de Guise had been married to the Duc d'Aosta. . . . " Well, there's another dream gone west . . ." I said. And tried to put her out of my thoughts.

When I got back to Rome I made the joyful discovery that it was her sister who had been married and not she.

Life in Rome was very gay that season, for as I was still alone, my house was always filled with friends and relations. My niece, Princess Xenia (Mrs. Leeds), came

to stay with me, and when she sailed from Naples my sister and I went to see her off. There I met Princess Françoise again, and definitely decided that I could never be happy in life again without that particular person. Some time passed, however, before I had a chance to propose. All I could do was to hint to the Dowager Duchesse d'Aosta about the feelings I entertained for her niece. She gave me evasive answers, and told me to be patient as the lady in question was not inclined to marry anyone for the moment.

About a year later the Duchesse telegraphed to me at the Villa d'Este where I was staying, asking me to come down to Naples at once, as she had something important to tell me.

I went . . . I saw . . . and was conquered. There was my dream lady, and very shortly afterwards we were engaged.

CHAPTER XVIII

MY SECOND MARRIAGE—A BIT OF FRENCH HISTORY—LIFE IN ROME—VENICE—GRAND WEDDINGS—THE SHOW-CASE!

WE were married in the "Capella Palatina" in Palermo, a monument of twelfth-century Byzantine art very much restored. We could not have chosen a more beautiful setting than its gilded mosaic walls, thrown into relief by the blaze of candles on the altar.

On the evening before we went through the civil marriage ceremony, which was, curiously enough, the last one performed in Italy, for on the following day, February 11, 1929, the "concordat" was signed between the Pope and the Italian State. The result was that the emotional Sicilian crowd assembled outside the church for our wedding was in a frenzy of excitement and did not know whom to cheer most, the Pope, the King, Mussolini, or the newly married couple. In other words, two marriages were being celebrated the same day!

All our relations were there in full force; the Greek family, with Prince Knud, second son of the King of Denmark, representing the Danish Royal house; the French family; most of the Italian family. My wife's witnesses were the Duc d'Aosta and King Manuel of Portugal, and mine were King George II and the Prince of Piedmont.

We were married from "Le Palais d'Orléans," my father-in-law's place in Palermo. The palace itself is

just a jumble of old buildings bought at odd moments and thrown together anyhow, but the whole effect is strangely harmonious, with a charm that only old places like that in Italy can acquire. There are acres and acres of land at the back, all planted with orange and lemon trees, and in spring when they are all in bloom the air is heavy with the sharp, sweet perfume.

That house has seen many things since it was bought by the Duc d'Aumale more than a century ago. It has seen the wedding of King Louis Philippe and Princesse Marie Amélie des deux Siciles about the year 1820; and the death of a sad and disappointed man, the Duc d'Orléans, more than a hundred years afterwards. It has seen the weddings and christenings and funerals of three generations . . . the last marriage celebrated there was that of my brother-in-law the Comte de Paris to Princesse Isabelle d'Orléans Bragance in 1932. His wedding, like those of my wife and her sister, had to take place outside France, as my father-in-law, the Duc de Guise, rightful heir to the French throne, lives in exile at the Manoir d'Anjou, near Brussels.

I married into one of the most romantic families in Europe, and one which has led a more or less nomadic existence for the last hundred years. Its path has been stormy since Charles X abdicated the Throne of France in 1830, to be succeeded by the more adaptable Louis Philippe, whose personal popularity carried him through the first difficult years of his reign.

But in the end he fared no better than his cousin, for the Revolution of 1848 exiled him from his beloved France for ever. His daughter-in-law, the widowed Duchesse d'Orléans, born Princess of Mecklenburg, whose husband had been killed in a carriage accident, was a woman of dauntless spirit and of a fine courage. Undeterred by the threatening attitude of the mobs in the Paris streets she set out with her two little sons, the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres, for the Chambre

des Députés, determined to urge the claims of her eldest son as heir to the vacant Throne.

On the way there the younger child was lost in the crowds, and after a despairing search the poor mother had to go on her way without him. Arrived at the Chambre des Députés she took the little Comte de Paris by the hand, and bravely presented him to that hostile assembly. The four-year-old boy " reigned " for exactly two hours, after which there was an uproar that ended in their fleeing for their lives to the Château d'Eux, their family estate in Normandy. A few days later the Duchesse left the shores of France in a small sailing-boat, taking with her both her children (the Duc de Chartres having been found by an A.D.C. and restored to his distracted mother).

They landed in England where Louis Philippe had already taken refuge. Queen Victoria welcomed them with the greatest kindness, and provided them with a home near Weybridge.

Years passed. Louis Philippe died. The Comte de Paris and his brother grew up in their peaceful English country home, with their hearts full of yearning for France. When the Civil War broke out in America they followed the example Lafayette had set them in the War of Independence, and set sail to join the army of the North. They went right through the campaign, the Comte de Paris as aide-de-camp to General Grant. Neither of the brothers had any special privileges ; they were treated like all the rest of the volunteers.

When the war ended the Comte de Paris remained for some years in America, for he had grown to love the new country more than he had ever loved England. But his younger brother returned to Europe, for the Franco-German War was looming up on the horizon and he longed to fight for his own people. Under the Second Empire there was no possibility of his landing in France . . . as himself. But in the name of Robert Lefort

he enlisted in the Army and served throughout the war.

He saw the stormy end of the Empire, and the flight of Louis Napoleon and Eugenie, and then went back to England.

The Monarchist Party in France gained steadily all through the unsuccessful Empire, and the Republic that followed it. The Comte de Chambord, grandson of Charles X and next in the succession to the Throne, was approached, at first cautiously, then, as his supporters became more sure of their ground, openly invited to return. But when everything had been prepared for his triumphant reception he electrified the party with an ultimatum. He would only accept the white flag if it bore the *fleur de lys*. He would never reign under the Tricolor!

The Monarchist Party split in dissension. Some of its members remained true to the Comte de Chambord, despite the jolt he had given them. The rest veered round to the younger branch of the family, headed by the Comte de Paris, whose views were more liberally inclined. Thus the Legitimist Party came into being.

Finally, after countless intrigues and interminable discussion, which caused bitter enmity in the Royal Family, the Comte de Paris decided to seek an interview with his uncle the Comte de Chambord, and settle the question of their rival claims once and for all. The historic meeting took place at the Castle of Frohsdorf, where the two branches were reconciled, and all the rights of the Crown passed to the minor branch.

But the psychological moment for the Restoration of the Monarchy had gone by. The French Royalist Party made its plans with renewed enthusiasm, but it was unable to carry them out. The Comte de Paris who had once been a king for two hours fretted out his heart in exile, and died in his English home in Weybridge, leaving the injunction that his body should never be

taken back to France until the heir to the throne should be there to pray on his tomb.

The Comte de Chambord, too, died in exile at Gorizia in Italy, and was laid to rest there by the side of his grandfather, Charles X. The old rivalry was ended for ever.

The claim passed to another generation. The two sons of the Comte de Paris, Philippe Duc d'Orléans, and the Duc de Montpensier, being dead, the present claimant is my father-in-law, the Duc de Guise, son of the late Duc de Chartres.

The Duc, to me, is a tragic figure. French, to the very marrow of his bones, loving his country with an intensity that very few so-called patriots possess, he fritters away his life in a damp, evil-smelling old house far from his beloved fatherland . . . and yet so near. When you arrive in Brussels coming from Paris, he will be at the station to meet you. But . . . he will never see you off . . . the train is taking you back to France.

At the outbreak of the Great War he at once volunteered, but the French Government would not accept him, so he tried the British, which, for some unknown and unaccountable reason, would also have nothing of him. Then he took a job in the French Red Cross, driving an ambulance. This activity at least was permitted him, though personally I fail to see the precise shade of political distinction between an ambulance driver and an officer. If the question of propaganda is in the balance, I should imagine that one would be as dangerous as the other. Presumably an ambulance driver would have more opportunity of impressing his claims on convalescent patients than an officer would get for haranguing his harassed company in the trenches. But politics have never been my strong point, so I refuse to give myself a headache puzzling over certain flagrant injustices!

For some months the man who might have been

King of France trundled his ambulance over the shell-swept roads of Normandy, and then gave it up and became a plain stretcher-bearer in the trenches, under fire the whole time. He had many narrow escapes, and was finally decorated with the "Croix de Guerre" at Vergemoulins. In that at least he was recognised by the French Government.

There is a very strong Royalist Party in France, and feeling against these ever-changing governments and party strife runs very high. But if you do not want to be forgotten in life and ignored, you have always got to put your sixpence in the plate. This is done without ceasing by my brother-in-law, the Comte de Paris, who works himself literally to the bone doing propaganda work. He has an office in Brussels where he works morning and afternoon with his secretaries and stenographers, editing his newspaper and writing and answering letters. Deputations come from all over France to offer their devotion to their "King," and they are always received either for lunch or are given refreshments in the afternoon. The Duchesse de Guise contributes much to all this. Being a woman she is allowed to go to France when she likes, so she and her daughter-in-law come and go constantly between Brussels and Paris.

The Duc de Guise possesses many castles in France surrounded by vast forests, the timber from which is the source of most of the family's income. But now with the Soviets dumping cheap wood all over the world, much of the value of the forests has diminished. The Duchesse de Guise, having Spanish blood in her veins, and loving sunshine and gaiety had always hated the cold climate of the North, so they decided to migrate south.

Eventually they settled in Morocco, where they bought large farms in the French zone. On these they grew maize, corn and vegetables, and reared cattle.

Then the Great War broke out and every French workman was called up. They were left with no one but Arabs who understood little or nothing of tilling the soil, fertilising, or driving tractors. So the two eldest girls set to work all day and most of the night doing men's work. (One of them is now Princesse Murat, the other my wife.) Marshalling their unruly squad of Arab labourers as best they could, they farmed the lands so well that they kept all the estates going for several years until they sold them and settled in Larache in the Spanish zone, a few miles away.

There they became great friends with Marshal Lyautey, that outstanding soldierly figure who made of French Morocco what it is to-day. He called the de Guise family "the pioneers," which in truth they were, and gave them many a practical hint on colonisation, at which he was an adept.

Apart from his military genius he had the wisdom to save all the centuries-old Moorish towns from destruction by the encroachment of modern buildings and innovations. Any new building had to be erected outside the town walls, so that Fez and Marrakech and many towns have lost nothing of their picturesque charm. The Arabs almost worshipped him, and his name is one to conjure with among them to this day. If you happen to knock at the door of some house, usually inaccessible to the stranger, and mention the Marshal, suspicious faces will break into smiles, the portal will be flung wide open, and you will be given a hearty welcome.

Lyautey's last wish was to be buried in the country he loved, and there he rests, among the Arabs, who venerate his tomb as that of a *marabou* (a saint).

Once the de Guise family had a very funny experience at Larache when they attended Military High Mass on Sunday. At all such functions in Spain it is the custom to play the national anthem during the elevation. What

was their horror when the band instead of playing the familiar strains suddenly broke into the lively air of "Chin, Chin, Chinaman . . ." from "The Geisha!" The effect on the congregation can be imagined!

My wife and I spent the first part of our honeymoon at the Hotel Villa Igea, where my brother, King Constantine, had died six years before. Little did I think, on that miserable day when I bade him good-bye for the last time, that I should come back to the same place at the zenith of my happiness. Queen Sophie had a memorial tablet set in the wall next to the window of the room in which he died.

My wife wanted to show me her childhood's haunts, so that autumn we sailed for Morocco, and went to the little town of Larache which is situated on the shore. I was charmed with the big colonial house, standing in its large garden which was one mass of flowers. The interior is decorated in the Moorish style, but in good taste, for that particular style if badly handled can be positively atrocious.

We made many trips into the country, to Fez, Marrakech, and the Atlas Mountains. The beauty of those mountains with their extraordinary kaleidoscope of every colour in the rainbow has to be seen to be believed.

Then we came back to Rome and settled down at the villa; as we are both sociable people there were soon crowds of friends coming and going.

My wife's sister, the Duchess d'Aosta, came to stay with us, and feeling tired one evening she retired to bed earlier than we, leaving us downstairs playing bridge and backgammon.

Suddenly wails of anguish rent the air, so that we all rushed in a body to see what had befallen the lady. There she was standing in the gallery in her nightdress with the little finger of her right hand dripping blood. It seems that she was just dozing off when an enterprising

mouse took a good nip at her hand which was hanging down outside the bed. A trap was set, the mouse caught, and I was only just in time the next morning to prevent the housemaid from pulling the plug on it. I let it loose in the garden, but having tasted blood must have given it the courage of a lion, for the next day it was back again to return to the attack.

If I were to do justice to the subject of entertaining in Rome, I should have to devote a whole book to it, and probably no one would want to read it, for parties, no matter how good they were at the time, make dull reading afterwards. Served up at second hand they are rather like stale biscuits and flat champagne. So I will confine myself to writing of one or two hostesses who entertain often and beautifully.

One of them is the Duchess of Sermoneta, born Vittoria Colonna. Her magnificent palazzo is built on the ruins of the theatre of Marcellus, and was formerly the Palazzo Orsini.

Vittoria once let her private apartment to the present Princess Ottoboni, then Mrs. Hector Sassoon, Italian born. They decided to give a ball there together, which was a very grand and smart affair. Everyone danced with great gusto, and the supper abounded in delicious dishes and excellent wines. All and sundry ate and drank to their hearts' content, and when they were all replete the cotillon began.

Lovely favours were handed round, masses of flowers, cigarette cases, walking sticks, vanity cases, etc. The *clou* was yet to follow. The co-hostesses arranged to enter the ballroom together holding a huge umbrella, one of those affairs the prudent use at golf. It was hung with scarves, handkerchiefs and ties.

Perhaps the supper was responsible for what happened, but anyway the sight of that gaily festooned umbrella proved too much for the equanimity of the guests. In a concerted mass they made one wild rush for the

hostesses, who were nearly trampled to death beneath the feet of men and women scrambling to tear everything they could lay hands on off the umbrella, which ended by being smashed.

Only a bad ankle prevented me from joining in the fray! I do not want to cast aspersions on Roman society, for I have heard of the same thing happening in other countries.

Another home, whose invitations were and are much sought after, is that of Princess Jane di San Faustino, born Miss Campbell of New York, whose wit and more than often caustic tongue are world renowned. Owning to seventy-five, she still rules her particular set with a rod of iron, her majestic personality draped in a widow's veil strikes awe to the heart of the young Roman matron and visiting foreigners. Yet she can be the best friend anyone could wish for in an emergency. I will never forget what she did in Venice for my first wife and myself when we were being branded as "pro-German" by certain so-called friends of my wife. Jane took up the cudgels on our behalf and terrorised the beach by the verbal pitched battles she had with those same "ex-friends," who were invariably routed and fled ignominiously. Few people have the courage to stand up for their friends at such moments, for to do so means either sharing their disgrace, or, in the case of royalty, being branded as a snob. Princess Jane is neither . . . she was never pro-German, and certainly not a snob.

The fashion of being "pro-German," or "pro-any-other-nationality" is over, thank goodness, and as for being a snob—well what is a snob, anyway? Poor royalty ought to thank its stars for rich snobs, else where would it be? I have met many so-called snobs, and found them just as human as anyone else. If I must confess the truth I am one myself, as far as artists are concerned; my own ilk interests me but little.

But I have just been writing of Venice, and that

reminds me that a delightful palazzo to stay at is that of Count and Countess Volpi di Misurata on the Grand Canal. It is far nicer to stay with charming friends in Venice itself, in a comfortable house, than at the over-rated Lido, or in one of the gingerbread hotels in town, whose walls just bulge outwards, with the numbers of trippers of all nationalities housed therein. "The Bride of the Adriatic" has certainly some queer sights to offer, and some extraordinary behaviour. But nothing anybody can do or say can ruffle her serene beauty and charm.

Count Volpi, apart from being one of the most eminent financiers of our day, is one of the most charming and kindest men I have ever met. As for the Countess, if ever the Almighty left an angel on earth to look after humanity it is she!

Another outstanding personality of Venice is Countess Morosini. A woman of world renowned beauty and great individuality, although now of a certain age, she still holds her undisputed place in Venetian society.

Lasting friendships are sometimes made on the Lido, and there is one I shall be grateful to fate for, to my dying day. When my first wife and I were in Venice in 1920 we met Miss Cornelia Armsby, a delightful Californian, with her friend, Miss Tower, who later became Mrs. Taft. We became friends at once, but very soon our paths diverged. Years after I advised her very strongly to come to Rome and settle there.

She took a lovely apartment in the Palazzo Colonna, and her parties warmed the cockles of one's heart with their spontaneous hospitality and good cheer.

Mrs. James Corrigan was another American to take a palazzo in Venice. Once she gave an enormous ball and asked us to come and stay with her a few days before it. It was beautifully staged like all her entertainments. All the guests were asked to dress in white, and the effect was charming. We had dinner at four large tables in two adjoining rooms. Towards the middle of the

banquet we heard a terrific crash in the next room, followed by a scream. A large porcelain vase, poised on top of an old Venetian cupboard, had somehow become dislodged, and smashed on the floor, just missing Princess San Faustino's head by an inch.

Mrs. Corrigan's hospitality has become almost a legend. But few know of the warm, charitable heart beating under that seemingly over-social exterior. The names of those who ought to be grateful to her is legion.

A function of which I shall always have lively recollections, not unmixed with amazement, is the wedding of the Prince of Piedmont to Princess Marie Jose of the Belgians, which took place at the Quirinal in 1930. Through the fault of no one in particular it was one long series of muddles.

In the first place the ceremony was timed for 10 a.m. and all the guests were asked to be there not later than nine. So as to be on the safe side, most of us arrived soon after eight o'clock. We were prepared for a wait of two hours, but not for nearly four, which was the actual time that elapsed before the service began. The wedding procession was delayed through first the bride's train, and then that of her mother, the Queen of the Belgians, coming off, and having to be solemnly stitched on by dressmakers who were rushed to the scene, before they could walk another step. What was worse, this disaster did not happen only once, but three times, in the case of the bride before she finally reached the altar.

Then when the ceremony was over the matter of precedence became sadly involved, with the result that the present King of England and Prince Paul of Jugoslavia, who was representing the late King Alexander, found themselves walking in the procession behind King Amanullah of Afghanistan and me.

The irrepressible spirits of the last-named monarch had risen to such a degree of elation that he almost skipped out of the Capitol, after grabbing someone's silk hat that did not belong to him, and waving it frenziedly in response to the cheers of the crowd, which he interpreted as being exclusively for him. But the acclamations of the spectators turned to smothered laughter when he put on the hat. Its owner's head was evidently much larger than his, with the result that he knocked it down right over his face where it stuck. He pulled and struggled to release himself in vain until an A.D.C. hurried to the rescue, caught on to the rim firmly and levered it up with a jerk that nearly sent the King flying down the steps.

An Italian royal wedding that should have been a very beautiful one, but which was spoilt by the weather, was the marriage of Princess Giovanna, daughter of the King of Italy, to the King of Bulgaria in 1932.

The ceremony took place at the beautiful old church in Assisi. We all arrived at the hotel there the day before on a glorious October afternoon. Never had the sun shone more brightly, never had the russet Umbrian hills looked lovelier, tipped with their fringe of scarlet and gold. But we awoke next day to find rain falling in torrents, the heavy sheet-like semi-tropical rain of the south, guaranteed to last for several hours at least.

And last it did all through that morning. Now there could be no more splendid setting for a wedding, or for any other ceremony, than the church at Assisi with its cloistered court, but no more unprotected place on a wet day, for it is built in tiers, and in order to get from the lower level to the massive front entrance under the tower, the wedding procession had to climb up a steep slope strewn with laurel leaves and box plants, and skirt over a long strip of grass. By the time we reached the doors we were wet through and splashed with mud up to our knees. To make matters worse there was a

strong wind blowing which caught the long skirts and veils of the ladies and whirled them about until they looked like limp rags. I was walking in the procession with my wife, and I remember that the veil attached to her head-dress got entangled in my docorations, so that we had some difficulty in releasing ourselves.

By the time the service was over the rain had stopped and we left the church in pale, watery sunshine, but most of the guests presented a sorry spectacle, for the mud had caked on the trousers of the men, and the women were still wet and bedraggled.

We had luncheon at a house midway between Assisi and Spoletto, and I sat just opposite King Ferdinand of Bulgaria and Queen Sophie of Greece. It was the first time the two had met for twenty years, and remembering the strained relations that had existed since 1913 when Sophie's husband, King Constantine, had given the Bulgarians a crushing defeat, I wondered how they would enjoy finding themselves neighbours. But I had forgotten that so much water had flowed under the bridges that it had swept away ancient enmities. They got on so well together that when the luncheon was over we could hardly separate them.

"What did you find to talk about?" I asked Sophie afterwards. "Why old times, of course," she said, looking almost surprised at the question. There was no bitterness in her voice or on her face.

But my wife, belonging to another generation, was not so tolerantly inclined towards her great-uncle, King Ferdinand, for when he assured her graciously that he felt ". . . beaucoup plus d'Orléans que Cobourg," she answered rather tartly: "Alors, vous avez déja oublié la guerre, mon oncle?"

The Italian Royal Family has always been more than kind to us. The fact of my wife's sister being the Duchess d'Aosta has strengthened in a way the ties of relationship. As far as I personally am concerned, the

relationship is rather distant with the house of Savoy. It is true that we are all descended from the same source, Mary Queen of Scots. She too, poor dear, must have had ancestors, but climbing a genealogical tree in a book like this, is too strenuous a business, so I leave it to the historically inclined.

The King and Queen of Italy are a model couple, devoted to one another and to their children, with an unflinching sense of duty to their country. The King is one of the most learned monarchs of Europe and it would be difficult to question him on any subject without getting a clear and concise reply. His collection of Italian coins, both ancient and modern, is world renowned. The Queen's chief interest in life is charity, and doing good to people in general. A tall regal figure, extremely handsome and well dressed, she draws the attention of everyone at any official function.

Nothing will prevent her however from donning something very simple and going off at any moment of the day or night to some obscure slum to comfort a dying person or help some poor woman in the throes of childbirth.

Royalty has been hauled over the coals lately by all the Press of the universe—perhaps some isolated cases have given cause for this grilling. But is it necessary to attack the whole caste if a few far-strewn members happen to have human weaknesses? The truth is that the Press, if I may say so, regards any member of any Royal Family as a lay figure, and if one of those lay figures, rightly or wrongly, shows any tendency to human weakness it is promptly smashed, and all its companions in the show-case go with it. But is it the fault of the companions?

CHAPTER XIX

FIRE AGAIN—FRIENDS—DENMARK—RESTORATION IN GREECE—OUR RETURN—THE COFFINS COME HOME—PEACE!

I AM writing the last chapter of this story of mine on a July day, when a haze of heat hangs over the Eternal City, and even the street beneath my window looks blistered and scorched. The accustomed roar of the traffic is reduced to a soft, lazy purr, for most people are away at the sea or in the mountains, and in any case no one wants to motor in the hottest hours of the afternoon.

So I sit by the open window writing in my shirt sleeves, and realise that never until to-day have I given enough sympathy to Ministers of State, clerks of every description, dentists and doctors, and in fact anyone condemned to toil through the summer months. And yet there is no doubting the fact that summer is the best season in Rome—if you can get away from the city often enough—and that, thanks to Mussolini's wonderful Lido at Ostia, is now within the scope of everyone. Even the poorest Roman families can avail themselves of the cheap railway tickets, and bathe and lie on the beach there to their heart's content.

The King and Queen were kind enough to allow us the free run of their private estate, "Castel Porziano," which has one of the finest beaches on the Italian coast. The golden sands stretch over fourteen miles, with never a human being in sight. The sea is approached by a nine-mile drive from the entrance gates, through

long, straight avenues of pines, whose waving branches meet overhead like the arches of a cathedral. The effect is especially beautiful driving home in the evening with the light of the setting sun glinting through the trees, turning the dark trunks to vivid crimson against the green of the foliage.

We would start off for the beach about midday with several friends, taking our luncheon with us, and return about six. We used to lunch in a thatched bungalow situated a few yards from the beach, and which also served as dressing quarters for the ladies. The men undressed opposite, in an old stone building whose original purpose had been a signalling post for ships at sea. It consisted of one long room with a kitchen range.

As the bungalow was thatched from roof to floor we were always more or less aware of the danger of lighted cigarette ends flung carelessly around, and everyone was warned to either extinguish them on their plates or else to throw them into the tubs of fresh water which were placed in readiness to wash the sand off the bathers' feet.

But all our precautions could not prevent what might have been a real tragedy.

We had gone down to the beach one day after lunching in the bungalow, some to bask and sleep in the sunshine, others to play backgammon, when I happened to look up and saw my wife, who had gone to have her usual sunbath some distance away, running towards us shouting and gesticulating violently.

We thought at first that she had found the corpse of someone who had been drowned, for such accidents are unfortunately only too common at Ostia where the currents are very strong, but as she got nearer to us we saw that she was pointing inland. We turned and to our untold horror saw a dense cloud of black smoke rising straight up from the roof of the bungalow.

All of us, men and women alike, took to our heels and tore up the hill. Captain Brady, the American Air

Attaché, and I were the first to arrive on the scene, and dashed in to salvage what we could. Outside one of the windows I saw a curtain of flame descending to the ground, and mechanically registered the fact that the thatch must have caught fire from the roof, and not from the walls, a conclusion which was afterwards proved correct. It was a case of spontaneous combustion, known to every farmer whose hayricks have caught fire from the heat of the sun.

Brady and I and the rest of the party who had joined us began throwing everything we could lay hands on out of the door and windows, and managed to save most of the ladies' clothes, the chairs, tables and crockery. Then the heat became unbearable, and the remaining things had to be abandoned to their fate.

We were gloomily surveying the blaze when we realised to our dismay that the wind, which happened to be pretty strong that day, was blowing landward. The flames running along the parched grass had caught the bushes at the back. With a shock of horror I remembered Tatoi. Those fourteen miles of pine forest behind us! And only a matter of minutes before the fire spread to them!

Several of our party sprang into cars and started off in all directions to give the alarm on the estate, and collect as many helpers as they could. Others went to telephone to Ostia for the local fire brigade.

In the meantime the rest of us, aided by the chauffeurs and one or two labourers, who had been returning to work after lunch when they had seen the blaze and hurried to the scene, seized spades and shovels, and tried to quench the fire with sand. But our efforts were about as successful as King Canute's had been with another of the elements, and all we did was to get ourselves badly scorched by flying cinders. By this time the flames were licking the edge of the forest, and remembering again Tatoi and those chains of leaping

fir-cones I own that I prayed with fervour for the wind to change.

If ever a prayer of mine was answered that one was! For just as it seemed the whole forest was doomed, the wind veered round as though by a miracle, and started blowing the flames back towards the sea.

In the meantime a crowd had collected, chiefly composed of the wives and families of the various employees and keepers on the estate, and there were enthusiastic cheers when the fire brigade arrived from Ostia, equipped with a frail and somewhat antiquated little engine, and a tank rather bigger than a tea-kettle, filled with water. The firemen were in a high state of pleasurable excitement, and evidently regarded it as a social occasion, for they went round among the spectators shaking the hands of all their cronies, and receiving long and detailed accounts of how the fire had broken out. By the time they had done speculating on its cause, the bungalow was reduced to a heap of charred sticks, and red-hot embers. Then, urged on by our representations that there was still danger to the surrounding forest, they started pumping water over the fire. The keepers' wives settled themselves comfortably in the chairs we had salvaged, got out their knitting and prepared to enjoy the fun.

All went splendidly for a few minutes, then . . . the tank was emptied. There was a long consultation before it was decided to sink the hose into a nearby well of salt-water. Another two minutes of energetic pumping, and then that source, too, went dry. The keepers' wives and children, who were by this time placidly finishing the remains of our lunch with apparent relish, regarded this new dilemma as a good joke, and rocked with laughter, in which I, at least, joined.

The hose was next dragged down the beach by perspiring volunteers to be sunk in the sea. It was obviously too short to cover the distance, but the chief

of the firemen was a conscientious man and insisted upon making the effort. When its futility was proved beyond question he sank down on the sand and surveyed the intervening space as though concentrated thought could bridge it.

Fortunately by this time the actual danger had passed, and we were able to desist from our labours. The firemen retired to receive the congratulations of the group on the chairs, while we dressed one another's burns as best we could.

My wife had to drive the car home, while I sat with my blistered feet hanging out of the window, and the chauffeur groaned behind me. We had to stop at a chemist's to be bandaged up before we could continue on our way.

We spent many happy hours that summer with Count and Countess Frasso, who had bought the famous Villa Madama, on the slopes of the Monte Mario.

The Villa Madama must be one of the most beautiful homes in the world. Built by Giulio Romano from designs made by Raphael, who with his pupils decorated the loggia for Cardinal Giulio de Medici (afterwards Pope Clement VII), it derives its name from Margaret of Austria, daughter of Charles V, and wife of Alessandro de Medici.

It was practically in ruins when the Frassos bought it, but with great artistic taste and understanding, aided by advice from leading architects, they restored it to its former glories. As soon as it was finished they moved in, and spent many spring and summer months there. Later though, when business compelled them to spend a great part of every year in America, the villa was usually let during the winters. Mrs. James Corrigan had it once, and entertained with a magnificence that must have rivalled that of Margaret of Austria; and

another year the Boons had it. Now it has been leased by the Foreign Office, and visiting diplomats of note are housed and banqueted in it.

When I used to stay at the Villa Madama in the days of the Frasso's tenancy I often wondered whether the departed spirits of the Medici ever returned there, and if they did what they thought of the revels of their successors. Probably they would have poisoned us all out of sheer envy!

The house was always filled with guests. Cinema stars—Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford, Gary Cooper, Kay Francis—English duchesses, international bankers, politicians, famous musicians, anæmic-looking poets. And all this social cocktail blended perfectly for several years, until the Frassos departed and left us to regret that their Roman home no longer exists.

Two more intimate friendships for which I have to thank Rome were those of Mrs. von Lengkerke Meyer and her daughter, Donna Giulia Brambilla. For several years Mrs. Meyer had been United States Ambassadress in Rome, and her daughter married an Italian diplomat, whose last post was at Athens, where both he and his wife became immensely popular, and are regretted to this day. When both mother and daughter were left widows, they made their home together in Rome, and had a house not far from ours.

Mrs. Meyer had a very decided character, and knew exactly whom she liked or disliked. She and I were firm friends though, and her death was a real grief. The friendship still continues with her daughter who, if she remarries, will be the ideal Ambassadress.

I know that Alexander Kirk will be furious with me for writing of him, for he shuns publicity of any description, but I must do it all the same for both my wife and I owe him so much in gratitude. He and his mother lived together in Rome for many years, and I have never seen two people more devoted to each other. She was

one of those women who seem ageless. She had the quick, alert mind and vivid reactions of youth, combined with the humour and understanding that only much experience of life can give.

Her son, Alexander, was Counsellor to the United States Embassy, and all Rome was aware that he always knew which string to pull and just when to pull it. His tact and comprehension of affairs gained him the confidence of the entire Italian Foreign Office, and he did much to promote friendship between Italy and America. But alas! I must write of him too in the past tense, for he has been transferred from Rome.

A house-guest of the Frasso's was Mrs. William Boyce Thompson, who had her beautiful yacht, the *Alder*, awaiting her at Civita Vecchia.

She invited my wife and me for a cruise and we sailed for Sardegna, Corsica, and Monaco, ending the voyage at Capri. The crossing between Monaco and Cap Corse was an experience I am not likely to forget.

We were all dozing blissfully in enormous deck chairs after lunch, and I was indulging in my bad habit of sleeping with my mouth open, when a wave chose that moment to empty itself on deck and incidentally down my throat! The yacht gave a violent lurch, sending the heavy chair and me sliding to the other end of the promenade deck, waking everyone on the way, while I spat out sea-water like a whale.

We bade farewell to our charming hostess at Capri, where we joined Miss Cornelia Armsby, who had taken a villa overlooking the "Faraglioni," two huge rocks jutting out of the sea.

The American Ambassador and Mrs. Garrett had also taken a villa just outside the town on the slope of a hill. The Ambassador's cousin, Miss Thomas, was engaged to Count Oppersdorf, and as she was alone in the world, it was decided that the wedding would take place in a small church adjoining the Garrett villa.

Arriving there was a strenuous business, for on the steep slopes of Capri you can get nowhere unless you use your own feet or those of a donkey. On a blazing August morning we started off in our Sunday best to walk to the church! By the time we reached it we were literally drenched in sweat.

After the wedding breakfast all the men took off their coats, the women, as usual, being dressed in practically nothing, and we all lounged on the terrace trying to get cool while we waited for the bride to change. The Ambassador followed everyone else's example, and appeared in a snappy blue shirt, in which, by the way, he was posing for his portrait by the famous Spanish artist Zuloaga.

There is only one disadvantage in writing of one's friendships: it marks the passing of the years, for one has to delve so far into the past for many of them. For some that have counted most in my life I have to turn back the pages to those far-away days in Russia when I stayed with my sister at Michailowskoe.

One of those friends is Sonia Cheremeteff, who is also my second cousin, for her grandmother was the daughter of the Emperor Nicholas I (my great grandfather) and married, first dutifully, the Duke of Leuchtenberg, and then, after his death, romantically, her father's A.D.C., Count Strogonoff. Of this second marriage was born a girl who became the wife of General Cheremeteff, and the mother of Sonia.

Sonia and I have been friends since the days when we played together in her mother's garden at Peterhof, while our English nurses gossiped in the shade, and through all the years we have never lost touch with one another.

The story of her life would fill a whole book, but then I think the greatest of all life-stories are often unwritten,

because they are not for this world to see. To live beautifully is the highest of all arts, and the most difficult to acquire, but Sonia has it in perfection. Yet the years have taken from her practically everything most of us call essential to happiness. She lost health long ago, for, since an injury to her spine when she was a girl in her teens, she has never known an hour's freedom from pain. She lost her fortune in the Russian Revolution, when she went through frightful experiences before she managed to escape with the Dowager Empress Marie Feodorovna from the Crimea. After a variety of adventures which would have made most people nervous wrecks for the rest of their days, she came to Rome with her husband, Captain de Daehn, a Russian officer who had been Naval Attaché here before the Great War. He has now become a complete invalid and Sonia nurses him herself, and in the intervals, until just recently, managed to run a business successfully. It takes a superior brand of courage to walk uncomplainingly up the hill to Calvary, but something more than mere courage to fly a flag there when you get to the top, which is what Sonia does. Therefore no one pities her, a compliment in itself, for she is one of the most delightful, most entertaining women in Rome.

I delve once more into those childhood days in Russia and remember that the Grand Duchess Anastasia of Mecklenburg-Schwerin used to come to Michailowskoe every year to visit her father, the old Grand Duke Michael, and that with her came her youngest daughter Cecile, a lovely girl, tall and slender, with a charm that captivated every one. Being more or less of an age we became friends, one of those boy and girl friendships which last to one's dying day. Years have often gone by without our meeting, but it has not made the slightest difference. We just pick up the old threads again as though we had never dropped them.

After her marriage to the Crown Prince of Germany

Cecile won the hearts of her future subjects, not only with her beauty, but with her intelligence and deep understanding. Loving her country with passionate sincerity, her one thought was how she could best serve it. The Great War was an unspeakable grief to her, for it meant severing many of the dearest ties of her life, but she put aside all personal feeling. Even in the aftermath of the War, when Empires tottered and fell, and Germany was plunged into internal strife with the Red menace looming ever nearer, she never lost her faith in the future. In one of the darkest hours she wrote this letter to a friend :

"*January* 5, 1919.

"Now we are entering the New Year, without hope, but not without courage. Our Fatherland, our magnificent German Empire lies shattered in ruins. One cannot hold this thought—it hurts too much ; the wounds are too deep. Our dreams followed the fortunes of our country ; we watched its trade flourish, over the seas and round the world, and our hearts beat high when we realised the progress the last thirty years had brought. And now we stand, faced with absolutely nothing. The humiliation is almost unbearable. And yet . . . just because of this humiliation we shall strain our forces, our knowledge, everything we learnt in our radiant youth under the great German Empire, and use them to help our poor humbled Fatherland.

"You and your dear wife have understood how profoundly the abdication has hurt me. It was the purpose of my life to serve my country with all my strength, with my whole being . . . that country we were so proud of. But God willed it otherwise, and I hope nevertheless to be able to serve it still, though in another way. This, too, is my husband's burning desire. His thoughts turn, in every letter I receive from him, to the welfare of his beloved Germany, and to the wish that God will help us to bring up our children brave Germans,

who will do their duty, whatever it may be, and uphold the tradition of their fathers. . . ."

There are still some idealists left in this world, still some people who can take defeat nobly!

Cecile's sister, Alexandrine, known in the family as Adini, is the present Queen of Denmark, and she too, is dearly beloved by her husband's subjects.

I was at Copenhagen only a few months ago for King Christian's Silver Jubilee, and the tremendous enthusiasm of the Danes for their Royal House was all the more impressive because they are not a demonstrative race.

The three Scandinavian kingdoms, although they have their internal problems to cope with, will always, I think, be a bulwark against Communism, at least of a revolutionary kind, for their reigning houses are precisely suited to the temperament of the people. The simple democratic lives led by King Haakon of Norway, King Gustave of Sweden, and King Christian of Denmark, appeal to subjects who have been accustomed since the days of the old Vikings to consider their king as the head of a clan rather than as a sovereign.

There is nothing of royal pomp and circumstance, for instance, in the way the King of Denmark goes for a ride on horseback every morning. No escort of police, no equerries, grooms and flunkies. He rides out into the streets alone, threads his way among cars and cyclists, and is more obedient to the traffic lights than many of his subjects. A few pedestrians salute him as he passes, but the majority take no notice. At a crossing one day, when he was waiting for the signal to go forward, the driver of a car who was having trouble with the catch of his door, slammed it so violently that the King's horse reared.

The King politely asked the man to be more careful, and he apologised at once. But a second later he forgot, and slammed it again. This time the horse plunged so

violently that it slipped on the asphalt and rolled over with its rider. They fell so heavily that one of the stirrups was broken in two.

The King was badly bruised and shaken, but insisted on remounting and riding back to the Palace.

The Queen, too, will drive out into the country in her little runabout quite alone. The peasants all know her, and wave a friendly greeting as she passes, much as they would to one of their own relatives. It is this spirit one notices so much in Denmark. The people consider their rulers as members of their own private family.

My father took the same principles to Greece with him, and despite the infinitely wilder state of the country they proved just as successful there, until he met his death at the hands of a hired half-breed.

King George II keeps to the same democratic ideals in Greece to-day, for the keynote of his private life is simplicity. In the beginning, immediately after the Restoration of November, 1935, it was rather a case of needs must, for although he was given a tremendous reception at the Piræus, there was no regal state in his actual homecoming. Even kings have their housing problems on occasions, and he was confronted with one immediately he arrived in Athens.

The big royal palace—"the cardboard box," as I called it in the days of my irreverent youth—had been confiscated after our second exile, and turned into the Chamber of Deputies, so he went into residence in the palace that had belonged to his father, and which, during the dictatorship of Venizelos, had been used for official receptions and State banquets. Consequently it was only half furnished, and it would have been better if it had been completely empty, for what furniture and decorations were there were singularly hideous. There were no guest rooms, and the King had to sit on his trunks in the corridor while a bedroom was prepared for him.

It was not very easy going in those first months after the Restoration, and he worked himself to the bone . . . literally, for he was a solidly-proportioned youth when he went back, and now he is as thin as a stick. At the present moment he has his two sisters, Irene and Katherine, to help him, and they take many of the social responsibilities off his shoulders. Irene acts as hostess for him, and everything runs like clockwork.

No king sits too securely on his throne in these days, but personally I have every confidence in the future of Greece. King George has all the qualities that make a good king. He is sincere, level-headed and determined; without being dogmatic. He has my father's sense of fair-play and his capacity for always being able to see the other fellow's point of view, and he knows just when to concede and when to stand firm. Although his reign has so far been by no means plain sailing he has made himself both liked and respected.

He has been most fortunate in his Prime Minister, General John Metaxas, a loyal and devoted friend, first to King Constantine and then to his son. His fidelity to the royal house brought him under the ban of Venizelos, and he only just escaped with his life on more than one occasion.

Incidentally, he was the one man (with the exception of King Constantine) whose advice, had it been listened to, might have averted the tragedy of the Asia Minor campaign.

Having been sent into exile by Venizelos, with other Ministers of King Constantine in 1916, he took refuge, first in Corsica, and then in Italy, where he remained until 1920, when he returned for a short visit to Athens. On his way back to Florence he learned of the great strength of the Turks in Asia Minor, and the unpleasant surprise which the wolf-like Mustapha Kemal was preparing for the unsuspecting Greeks, who had been doped by Venizelos into believing they were going to

have a walk-over. Metaxas, who had been one of the ablest men of King Constantine's staff in the Balkan Wars was so convinced of the truth of this information that he waylaid the Greek Mission at Brindisi, on its way to London to discuss the campaign, and warned its members not to make any decision without definite guarantees of support from Great Britain. Blown up by false confidence in the promises of Venizelos they did not even trouble to listen to him, and hinted that he had better mind his own business.

Some months later Metaxas and his family returned once more to Greece and took a villa at a seaside resort, where they lived until the General was recalled to Athens. There he was even more insistent in his advice to make peace with Turkey at the earliest opportunity, and retire from Asia Minor before there was a complete debacle. But the Ministers only swept aside his arguments. Greece was riding for one of the worst falls in her history!

Gounaris, who was then Prime Minister, knowing the General's military ability, offered him the post of Chief of Staff, but he declined it saying that he would not direct a campaign in which he had no faith.

Instead he wrote strong articles to the newspapers, pointing out the folly of the undertaking, and urging that at all events King Constantine should not be sent to Asia Minor to lead it, and thus bear the brunt of the inevitable disaster.

The rest of the story is history. Metaxas was proved, only too tragically, right. The Greek Army was annihilated, and Smyrna reduced to ashes. King Constantine was forced to abdicate, and the faithful friend who had tried to save him had to take flight from the vengeance of the Venezelists.

He managed, through the help of the Norwegian Consul at Patras, to board a Norwegian cargo boat, disguised as an ordinary sailor, and accompanied by

his wife and secretary, who were dressed in shabby clothes, and represented themselves as poor emigrants.

They had hardly left the port before two torpedo boats landed their crews with instructions to find Metaxas and shoot him at sight.

The fugitives decided to land at Messina, but as they had no passports they could only do so in secret. Relatives, already in the town, got in touch with some smugglers who agreed to take them off in a fishing smack. So the cargo boat was stopped for a moment off the Straits of Messina, and by the light of the moon the three passengers were transferred to the frail little craft, which landed them safely at a point north of Messina. From there they were able to reach Palermo. Finally, travelling by slow stages, first to Naples and then to Rome, they arrived in Paris, where they remained until the general amnesty, which was declared in 1924, made it safe for them to return to Greece.

In November, 1935, just a year after the Restoration, the bodies of King Constantine, Queen Sophie and my Mother were taken from the crypt in Florence and brought back to rest in their own country. I and everyone in the family went to Athens for that home-coming. The memory of it will remain with me all my life.

My wife and I arrived there a month before the ceremony, for I wanted her to see my country for the first time unclouded by sorrow, I had so often described it to her, the beauty of its sunsets, the mountains silhouetted against the sky, the colours so vivid that one would say the Almighty had spilt the entire contents of his palette, splashing blues and greens and purples indiscriminately over the landscape. But I had forgotten to add that the climate never does anything by halves in Greece, and that when it does rain it POURS.

And that was exactly what it was doing when we put in at the Piræus. Black clouds hung over the sky; a sheet of rain obscured the land like a heavy curtain.

But the warmth of our reception made us forget the unfriendliness of lowering heavens. Bells were ringing frantically, sirens blowing at full blast, bringing back bitter-sweet memories of that last homecoming when my mother, as Queen Regent, had met us in her launch.

The King and my brother Andrew had come to meet us, to welcome my wife, and we drove to the Palace through streets decked with flags, and lined with cheering people. And suddenly with a lightning change of mood the weather relented; the clouds parted, and one long shaft of sunshine stole out to gild the Acropolis.

But even I never realised the wonder of the Acropolis until I saw it flood-lit for our benefit that night. My wife and I stood on the balcony and gazed at it, spell-bound by the sheer beauty of the sight before us. Against the dark background of the rock which merged imperceptibly into the starless velvet of the sky the Parthenon stood out, shimmering in the light, like a fairy palace far above us, unreal as a dream.

The days that followed were crowded, for there were so many old friends to see, so many familiar places to visit. The years had brought many changes, as I had known they would; yet I found myself half resenting them, for as we grow older we grow more and more tenacious of the past with all its associations.

But I must, in fairness, say that Athens has improved in many ways out of all recognition. The city is bigger, more modern, cleaner, if less picturesque. New buildings raise their heads on all sides, new factories, new industries. There is even a new society, a richer, more progressive, more cosmopolitan society, threatening to elbow out the old families, many of whom have disappeared. There was more entertaining than in my father's day. Nearly

every evening there was some official dinner; in the mornings my wife and my nieces held audiences at the Palace, and received fifty or sixty ladies before lunch.

I wanted my wife to see the Peloponnesus, so we arranged a motor tour there, and set off in two cars. With us were my brother Andrew, Captain Melas, who had been his A.D.C. in Asia Minor, and his wife; Countess Volpi, who had accompanied us from Rome; Mme Foresti, and Colonel and Mme Metaxas. It was to be a strictly incognito tour, so hotel rooms were booked, and lunches ordered *en route* in the name of Colonel Metaxas. It worked perfectly—until after lunch on the first day. Then the story of the tour leaked out in some mysterious way, and when we arrived in Nauplia that evening we saw, to our dismay, banners and triumphal arches, and civic dignitaries waiting to deliver speeches of welcome. So there was nothing to be done but make the best of it.

The rest of the tour was a triumphal progress. Instead of the quiet holiday and informal sightseeing we had planned, there were five days of official speeches, handshakings and cheering crowds. Churches had to be visited, town halls and schools inspected, and my wife, who as "the new princess" came in for most of the honours, was almost mobbed in every town we went through. But it was all done so charmingly, and with such good will that one could have nothing but gratitude for so much loyalty and affection. At the end of every day the cars were full of presents that had been showered upon us—fruit, vegetables, flowers, candles, jars of honey—gifts of every description. We took away as many as we could carry when we left Greece.

We returned from Athens to receive the loved remains of those dear ones who had travelled all the way from Florence.

The coffins were placed in a special railway van, which had been beautifully decorated by the Italians, for whose unfailing kindness and forethought our family will always be grateful. My sister Marie and her husband, my nephew, Prince Paul, and my niece, Princess Irene, who were on the train were deeply touched by the sympathy shown them all along the route. At every stop there were bands and officials waiting with wreaths, and in Rome there was a Guard of Honour, and the van was thrown open on both sides to enable members of the Greek and Russian colonies to pass through in a last farewell.

Then the train went on to Brindisi, where an escort of Italian troops carried the three coffins on board the Greek warship *Averoff*—the same ship on which King Constantine had made his joyous return to Athens sixteen years before. His old standard was hoisted once again, and the guns of the fortress boomed out in salute to the soldier King returning to his own country.

And so at length they came to Athens, borne through the city on gun-carriages drawn by bluejackets, and escorted by files of Evzones in their picturesque pleated skirts and short coats. The streets were lined with sorrowing people as they passed by on their way to the Cathedral, where they lay in state for six days while crowds filed past the three coffins, draped in their flags, and at the foot of each one single wreath of laurel. And on the seventh day they were buried with all the pomp and splendour the nation could give them. Eighty bishops, gathered from every town in Greece, lined the steps of the high altar, making in their jewelled robes a symphony of light and colour against the sombre background of the Cathedral. My brothers, Andrew and Nicholas, and my nephew Paul and I stood as a Guard of Honour at the four corners surrounding the coffins.

Then, when the service was over, they were taken

through the streets for the last time to rest in the family vault.

It was one of those days such as are only found in Greece, bitterly cold, with a north wind blowing straight down from the snow-capped Parnes; yet the sky was of that translucent blue, such as only an Attican sky can be, and the sun was gilding swords and epaulettes, and giving an added brilliance to the flags that waved from every window.

Clear-cut in that limpid atmosphere, the mountains seemed nearer than ever, as though they had come close to beckon them—those mountains they had loved, that were soon going to gather them to their familiar breasts. They seemed to approach, and reach forward in the golden sunshine, with a promise of infinite peace and rest . . . and this promise has been fulfilled.

It was more a festive sight than a funeral one, this last journey of a King and leader who had attained the unscalable heights of legend, and who passed on his way through those crowded streets where stood many an old veteran whose eyes grew misty, remembering the days when they had fought side by side in the Balkan Wars.

And the whole city mourned those two Queens, Mother and Wife, whose only thought in life had been the welfare and happiness of those multitudes who watched their passing.

But dawn succeeds night, and there is an end to all sorrow. King George II, following the three flag-draped gun-carriages, seemed to the entire nation as the herald and symbol of a new era of prosperity and happiness for Greece.

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